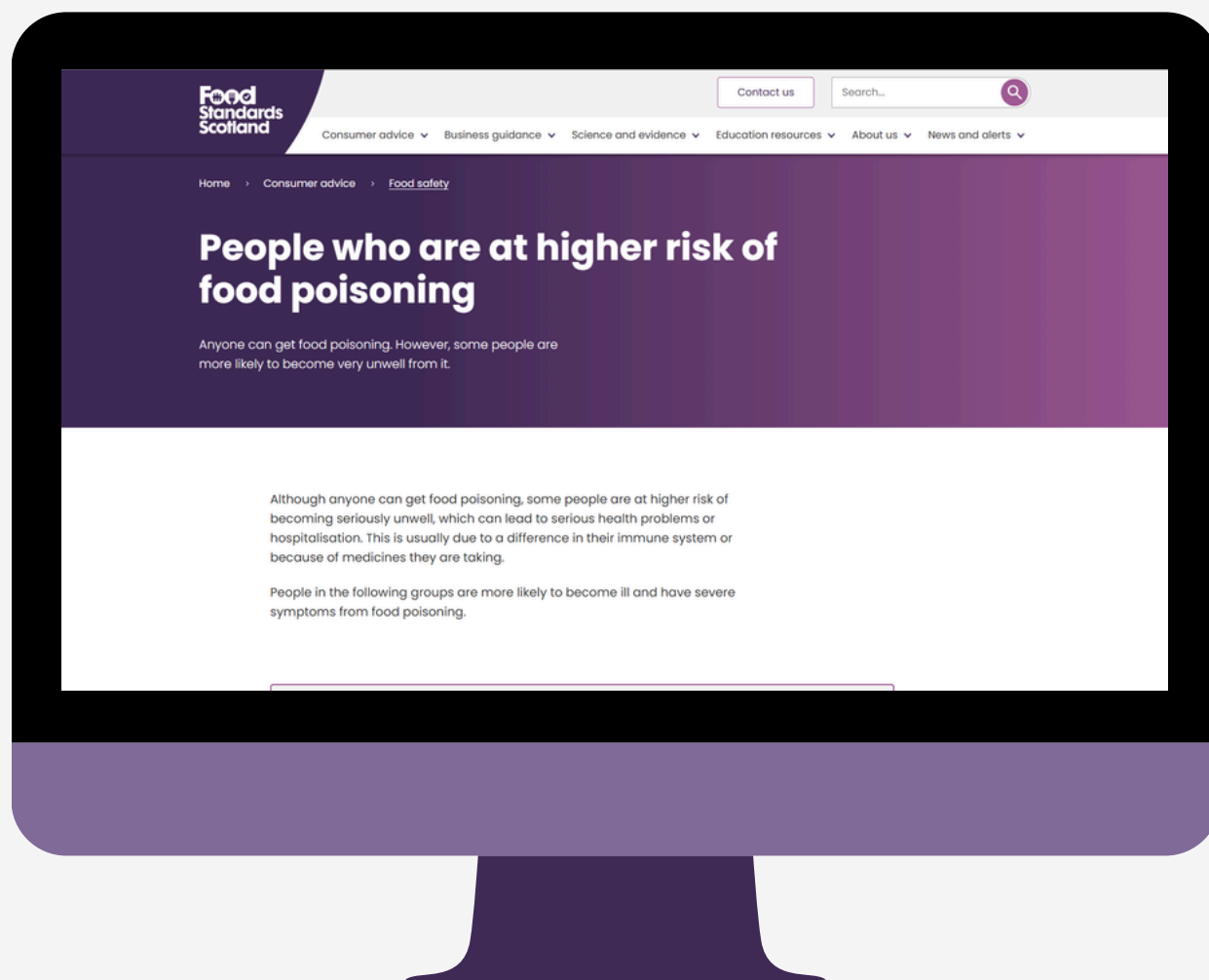


People who are at higher risk of food poisoning

Partner toolkit

June 2026



Background

Following an independent evidence review and input from an expert panel, Food Standards Scotland has clarified who is more likely to become unwell and experience more severe symptoms from food poisoning.

The updated definition builds on existing guidance by setting out which life stages, health conditions and medicines can increase risk.

It also highlights that risk can be higher when someone falls into more than one group, helping health professionals, carers and service providers share clear food safety advice for those most at risk.



About the campaign

Food poisoning can affect anyone, but some people are more likely to become seriously unwell.

People in the following groups are more likely to become ill and have severe symptoms from food poisoning:

- **Young children (typically aged under 5)**
- **Pregnant women**
- **Older adults (typically aged 65 and older)**

- **People with underlying health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, HIV, and liver or kidney disease**

- **People taking certain medicines or treatments, such as chemotherapy, immunosuppressant medicines and proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), including omeprazole**

The risk can be higher when someone falls into more than one group, such as an older adult living with diabetes

The focus of the campaign is practical food safety, not restriction or fear. People should not stop taking prescribed medicines and should speak to a healthcare professional if they have questions.

Why risk can be higher

For many of the groups included, increased risk is linked to changes in the immune system.

A weaker or developing immune system can make it harder to fight infection. This means:

- food poisoning may be easier to catch
- symptoms may be more severe
- illness may last longer

What action to take

Good food safety practices are important for everyone, but for those in a higher-risk group it's especially important to understand the risks.

Following simple food safety tips can reduce the risk:

- follow use-by dates
- keep fridge temperature between 0°C and 5°C
- cook food thoroughly until steaming hot

Further guidance and practical tips are available on the [Food Standards Scotland website](#)

Supporting the campaign

We would welcome your support in sharing this information with relevant audiences.

The toolkit includes:

- a print-ready A4 poster for general awareness and signposting
- suggested copy for newsletters and websites
- social media copy, including variations highlighting different life stages or health conditions

Assets can be used individually or together, depending on your audience and setting.



Downloading the assets

The campaign toolkit contains ready-to-use materials that can be shared with:

- colleagues and professional networks
- service users and carers
- members, supporters and the wider public

[Download all assets](#)

[Download the website and newsletter copy](#)

[Download the social media copy](#)

[Download the social media graphics](#)

[Download the A4 poster](#)

[Download the factsheet](#)

[Download the life stage assets](#)

[Download the health condition assets](#)

[Download the medication assets](#)

Links to download assets for each higher-risk group are on the next page

Copy and assets for individual higher-risk groups

- Young children resources
- Pregnancy resources
- Older adults resources

- Cancer and chemotherapy resources
- Diabetes resources
- HIV resources
- Kidney disease resources
- Liver disease resources

- Immunosuppressant medication resources
- Proton pump inhibitor (PPI) resources

Contact us

If you'd like more information or to discuss the advice, please contact us by email at foodborneillness@fss.scot

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