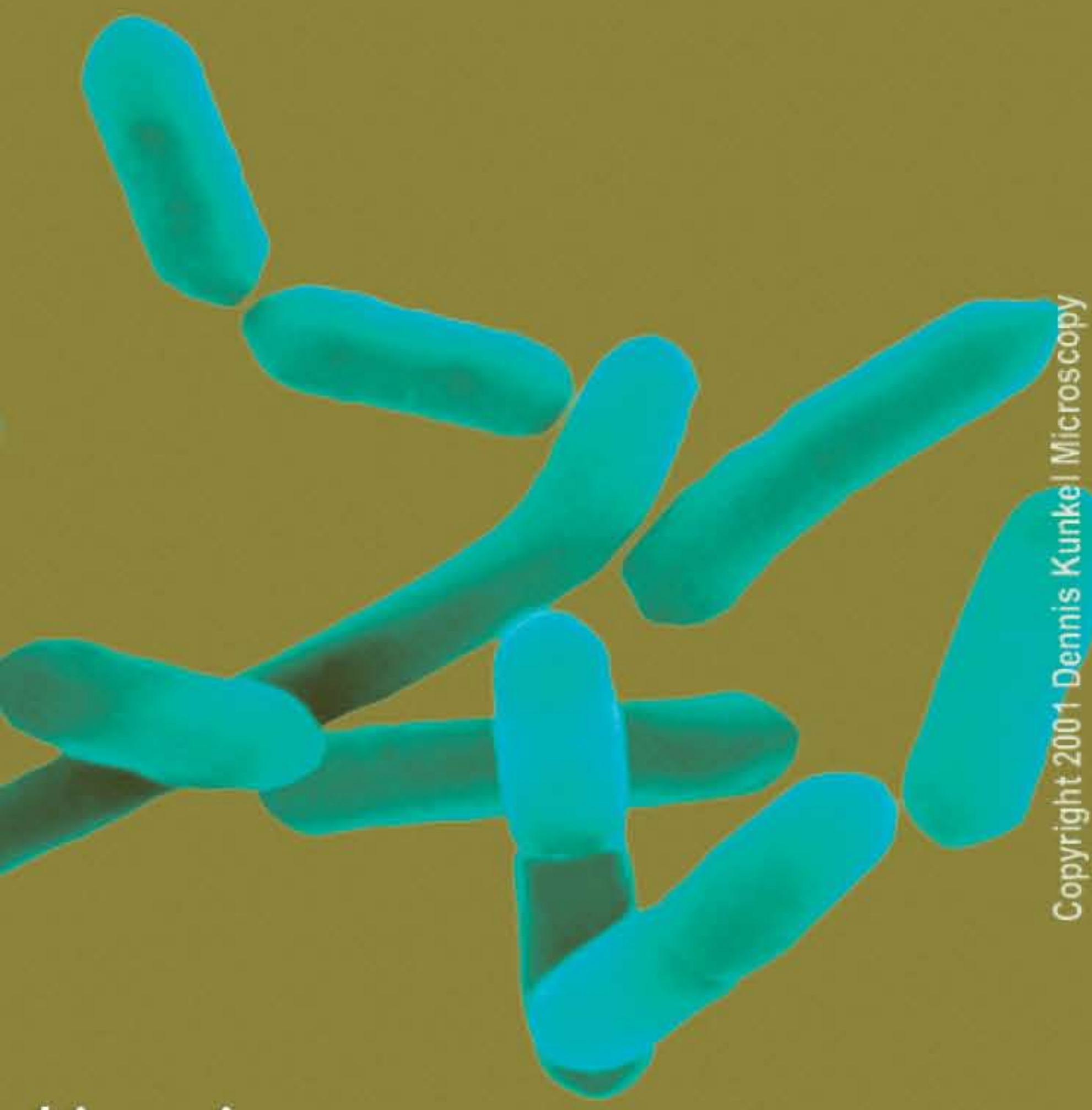
PulseNet

Series 3



Listeria monocytogenes

Department of Health and Human Services

CDC & ATSDR

Listeria monocytogenes

Listeria monocytogenes is a short, rod-shaped bacterium. Twenty of them lined up end-to-end would equal the length of a grain of pollen. *Listeria* causes nearly 2,500 illnesses per year in the United States and about 500 deaths. It has up to five whip-like tails that help it move. *Listeria* loves cool, wet places and grows fast in dairy products like soft cheese, sandwich meat, and hotdogs. You can stop *Listeria* by throwing away any foods that have passed the expiration date on the package and by making sure the food you eat is clean and fully cooked.