

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

SALMONELLOSIS

The *Salmonella* germ is actually a group of several kinds of bacteria that can cause diarrhea in humans. They are microscopic living creatures that live in the feces (poop) of people or animals.

Symptoms

Most persons infected with *Salmonella* develop symptoms 12-72 hours after infection. These include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Headache
- Fever
- Vomiting (sometimes)
- Symptoms usually last 4-7 days. However, it may take a few months to feel completely normal.
- A small number of people may develop complications such as dehydration, blood stream infections, or ongoing pains in their joints, irritation of the eyes and painful urination.

Transmission

- *Salmonella* bacteria leave the body in the stool (poop). If infected people don't wash their hands well after going to the bathroom, they can pass the bacteria to others with their hands.
- *Salmonella* also spreads through contact with infected animals, especially birds, pigs, cows, rodents, and pets such as reptiles, chicks, ducklings, dogs and cats. Pet food can also be contaminated.
- Foods can be contaminated with *Salmonella*, such as meat, poultry, milk, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, eggs and any food prepared by a person who has salmonellosis. Cooking kills *Salmonella*.

Diagnosis & Treatment

- A health care provider can diagnose *Salmonella* by testing the stool, blood, or another body fluid.
- Most persons recover without treatment. In fact, antibiotics may even make the infection worse.
- People with diarrhea can lose fluid quickly. They should drink plenty of water and fluids to make up for it.
- People with severe infections may need antibiotics or fluids through an IV.

Prevention

- Wash hands well after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before eating or preparing meals.
- Make sure all foods containing meat or eggs are fully cooked. Remember that raw eggs may be present in homemade sauces, dressings, ice cream, cookie dough and frostings. Don't eat these raw.
- Thoroughly wash all vegetables and fruits before eating.
- Keep raw meat and eggs separate from other foods. Even one drop of raw meat juice is enough to make you sick and contaminate any foods, plates, or utensils that touch it.
- Use pasteurized milk and dairy products. Mother's milk is the safest food for infants. Breast-feeding prevents salmonellosis and many other problems.
- Wash hands well after touching animals, their cages, or pet food. Turtles and other reptiles often carry *Salmonella* on their bodies. For this reason, reptiles are not good pets for small children.

Additional Information

Anyone who attends child care or works in food service, direct patient care, or child care should stay home until diarrhea is gone. People who handle food at work need two stool (poop) specimens that have no *Salmonella* in them before they can return.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



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