

SALMONELLOSIS



What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is an infection with bacteria called *Salmonella*, which generally affects the intestines and occasionally the bloodstream. It is one of the more common causes of diarrheal illness. Most cases occur in the summer months and can be seen as single cases, clusters or outbreaks.

Who gets salmonellosis?

Any person can get salmonellosis, but it is diagnosed more often in infants and children. Young children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised are the most likely to have severe infections.

How are *Salmonella* bacteria spread?

Salmonella are spread by eating or drinking contaminated food or water or by contact with infected people or animals.

What are the symptoms of salmonellosis?

People infected with *Salmonella* may experience mild or severe diarrhea, abdominal cramps, fever and occasionally vomiting. Bloodstream infections can be quite serious, particularly in the very young or elderly.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

The symptoms generally appear one to three days after contact with *Salmonella* bacteria.

Where are *Salmonella* found?

Salmonella can be found in raw or undercooked meats and eggs, unpasteurized milk and cheese products. Foods can also be contaminated by *Salmonella* bacteria during preparation or processing. Other exposures may include contact with infected animals, especially poultry, swine, cattle, rodents and pets, such as reptiles (iguanas, snakes, lizards and turtles), chicks, ducklings, birds, dogs and cats. Previous outbreaks of *Salmonella* have been associated with peanut butter, frozen pot pies, eggs, pet foods and turtles.

How long can an infected person carry *Salmonella*?

An infected person can carry the bacteria for a few days or several months. People who have been treated with oral antibiotics and younger people tend to carry the bacteria longer than others.

Do infected people need to be isolated or excluded from work or school?

Most infected people may return to work or school when their diarrhea has stopped. Food workers, health care personnel and children in daycare must obtain the approval from the Macomb County health Department before returning to their normal work activities.

What is the treatment for salmonellosis?

Salmonella infections usually resolve in five to seven days and often do not require treatment unless the patient becomes severely dehydrated or the infection spreads from the intestines. Those with severe diarrhea may require rehydration, often with intravenous fluids. Antibiotics are usually not necessary unless the infection spreads from the intestines.

How can salmonellosis be prevented?

1. Always handle raw poultry, beef and pork accordingly:

- Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other foods. Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize holding at room temperature.
- Never place cooked food on an unwashed plate that previously held raw beef, poultry, pork, fish or seafood.
- Cutting boards and counters used for beef, poultry, pork, fish or seafood preparation should be washed immediately after use to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats. While the juice color will usually change from red to gray when the meat is fully cooked, it is not a reliable test to assure it is safe to eat.
- Always check the temperature with a meat thermometer. Foods that reach the temperatures listed below or higher are fully cooked.

Chicken 165° F

Hamburger 160° F

Pork 150° F

Hot dogs 140° F

Leftovers 165° F

Eggs 145° F

Other foods 140° F

- To check the temperature of the meat, insert the thermometer into the center of the meat, which is the least cooked part. For checking hot dogs, go from the end of the hot dog to the center. Be careful not to pass through the meat and touch the cooking surface or you will get a false high temperature reading.
2. Avoid eating raw eggs or undercooking foods containing raw eggs. Raw eggs may be unrecognized in some foods such as homemade hollandaise sauce, Caesar and other homemade salad dressings, tiramisu, homemade ice cream, homemade mayonnaise, homemade eggnog, cookie dough and frosting.
 - 3.. Avoid drinking unpasteurized milk.
 4. Wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
 5. Encourage careful hand washing before and after food preparation.
 6. Wash hands (especially children) immediately after handling reptiles, having contact with pet feces or handling pet food or treats.
 7. Do not keep reptiles as pets in homes with immunocompromised persons or young children.

For more information, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website www.cdc.gov and search the disease you are interested in their *A to Z Index* in the blue bar at the top of the page.