

Salmonella Information Sheet

What is Salmonella Infection?

Salmonella are bacteria that can infect the stomach and intestines and cause mild to severe diarrheal illness. Most people get sick 12 to 72 hours after getting infected, and recover completely in 4-7 days. Salmonella can spread from the intestines to blood, bones, or joints, where it can cause severe illness. Serious illness is more common in young children, elderly people, and people with weakened immune systems.

How can you catch Salmonella?

You can catch salmonella by eating contaminated foods or by having contact with infected animals or their environment. Salmonella is sometimes passed from person to person.

- Food: Especially raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, meats. Also unpasteurized milk, cheese or juices, contaminated raw fruits and vegetables, spices, nuts. Any food can be contaminated even pet food.
- Animals: Especially reptiles (snakes, turtles, lizards), amphibians (frogs, salamanders), birds, and pets. Animal feces (poop) are always a possible source of this infection.

What are the symptoms of Salmonella Infection?

Most people with salmonella experience the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea (may be bloody)
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Headache

IMPORTANT: People with this infection should not attend childcare or work as food handlers, healthcare providers or childcare workers until treatment is provided and symptoms have stopped!

How can you be treated for Salmonella?

Salmonella infections usually get better within 4-7 days and do not require treatment other than fluids to prevent dehydration. People with more serious infections may require hospitalization or antibiotics.

How can you prevent Salmonella?

Salmonella can be killed by cooking and pasteurization of food. Some animals, such as reptiles, cannot be cured of salmonella and can spread the infection to people.

- Avoid eating raw/undercooked: eggs, poultry or meat, and unpasteurized milk, cheese or juices.
- Keep food refrigerated before eating, and refrigerate cooked food promptly after serving.
- Wash produce before eating.
- Wash hands before preparing food and do not prepare food if you have diarrhea.
- Wash hands, cutting boards, counters, knives, and other utensils before and after handling uncooked foods.
- Wash hands with soap and water after contact with animals, their environment, or their food or treats. Do not have reptiles in a home with a child younger than 5 years of age.

*If you need more information, please call the Public Health Information Line at (602) 747-7500