



SALMONELLOSIS

What is Salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis (sal-mohn-el-OH-sis) is a diarrheal illness which is caused by bacteria called *salmonella* and, is one of the most common causes of food poisoning in the United States.. There are many different types of *salmonella* bacteria that can cause illness in humans. More common during the summer months, most cases of salmonellosis are reported as isolated events. However, multiple cases (outbreaks) are not unusual in group settings.

What are the symptoms?

The most common symptoms of salmonellosis are diarrhea, abdominal cramping, headache and fever. Symptoms usually develop from 6 to 72 hours (usually 12 to 36) after exposure. Severe symptoms can last 4 to 7 days. Some people infected with *Salmonella* have no symptoms at all

How is *Salmonella* spread?

These microscopic organisms live in the intestines of humans and animals, including birds. It can be found in water, food, soil, or on surfaces contaminated with the bacteria.

Humans can become ill with *salmonella* by eating foods that are contaminated with infected animal feces. These contaminated foods, usually beef, poultry, milk, and eggs often look and smell normal. Contaminated raw fruits and vegetables may also be a source of infection. Specific foods such as alfalfa sprouts, melons, spices, and nuts have been recognized in outbreaks. Many raw meats and shells of eggs are frequently contaminated with *salmonella*. Thoroughly cooking these foods thoroughly kills these germs. Human hands are the primary way the bacteria are passed from person to person. Infected persons who prepare or handle food can contaminate food by failing to adequately wash their hands with soap and water after restroom use.

Pets can also be infected with *salmonella*. Certain pets may have the germ in their stool, especially those with diarrhea. Baby chicks and ducklings also frequently carry *salmonella*. Reptiles, such as snakes, pet turtles, lizards and iguanas, are especially likely to harbor *salmonella*, even if healthy. People can become infected if they do not wash their hands after contact with the animal's stool or after handling a reptile. Specific pet food and treats have been identified as sources of infection. .

What is the treatment?

Most persons who become ill with salmonellosis recover completely without any long lasting effects. Treatment is generally not needed unless the patient becomes severely dehydrated or the infection spreads from the intestines. Infants, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems have a greater chance of having severe illness and may require hospitalization.

How can *salmonella* infection be prevented?

The local health department gathers information about reported cases, provides education, and offers guidance on prevention and control of illness.

Persons working in “sensitive occupations”, such as food handlers, health care workers or child care providers or children who attend day care centers, are at greater risk of spreading infectious illness. *All infected persons involved in these activities are not permitted to work until diarrhea has stopped.*

A food service workers must be symptom-free, provide two negative stool results AND given approval by the local health department before he or she can return to work.

TIPS FOR PREVENTION

There are several ways to reduce the risk of exposure to salmonella. They may include:

- Do not prepare foods for others if diarrhea continues or if recently diagnosed with salmonella.
- Do not eat raw or undercook eggs. Use pasteurized eggs to prepare foods that don’t require cooking and contain raw eggs, such as hollandaise sauce, salad dressings, desserts, homemade ice cream, homemade mayonnaise, cookie dough and frostings.
- Avoid eating undercooked poultry and meat, including hamburger. All meat should be well cooked and not pink in the middle. *Salmonella* is killed by cooking and pasteurization.
- Do not consume raw or unpasteurized milk or other dairy products (cheese, ice cream).
- Peel and wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.
- Prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen by washing hands, cutting boards, countertops, knives, utensils, and other surfaces after handling raw foods. Keep all uncooked meats separate from produce and ready-to-eat foods. Do not cut up raw chicken with a knife then use the same knife to cut up vegetables for a salad. Wash the knife, cutting surface, and your hands in between to avoid spreading germs.
- Keep food properly refrigerated before cooking. Chill foods promptly after serving and when transporting from one place to another.
- Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water:
 - ✓ before handling food
 - ✓ in between handling different food items
 - ✓ and prior to eating.
 - ✓ after using the bathroom
 - ✓ after changing diapers
- Always wash hands with soap and water after handling any animal and / or animal feces.
- Reptiles, including turtles, are not appropriate pets for small children and should never be in the same household as an infant.
- *Be a good teacher and role model to others!!*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
SCHD Communicable Disease Unit 330-375-2662
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com
Minnesota Department of Health www.health.state.mn.us
Federal Food Safety Information www.foodsafety.gov