



Salmonella



What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacterial germ that gets into the intestines and causes illness. The bacteria can be found in contaminated raw produce, raw eggs, raw (unpasteurized) milk, meat, poultry (chicken, turkey), as well as pet turtles, chicks, snakes, iguanas and lizards.

How is Salmonella spread?

Most types of Salmonella live in the intestinal tracts of animals and birds and are transmitted to humans by contaminated foods, such as beef, poultry, milk, or eggs. Salmonella bacteria are also shed in the feces of infected individuals. Unless there is proper hand-washing after bowel movements, the bacteria can be spread from contaminated hands to food during preparation. Salmonella may also be found in the feces of some pets, especially reptiles, and people can become infected if they do not wash their hands after contact with these animals. If you have been exposed to the bacteria, you may develop symptoms 12 to 72 hours after infection.

How is Salmonella treated?

Salmonella infections usually resolve in 4-7 days and often do not require treatment. Medication is only given in certain situations or if you become severely dehydrated. To make sure the infection is gone you may have to submit another stool sample. If you are a food-handler, or work at, or attend a day care you may be excluded until symptoms are gone and stool cultures are negative. Occasionally, Salmonella can be shed in stool for several weeks or months after symptoms resolve.

How can Salmonella be prevented?

- Do not eat raw eggs or drink unpasteurized milk or juice.
- Throw away cracked eggs because they may have the germ in them.
- Cook meat to a safe internal temperature before eating it. See www.foodsafety.gov for specific safe temperature information.
- Put cooked meat into a refrigerator right after a meal.
- Scrub cutting boards, counters, and utensils with hot soapy water after contact with raw or cooked meat, poultry or eggs.
- Wash your hands and your children's hands after using the bathroom, after changing diapers, before eating, before and after preparing food, between handling food items, and after playing with animals.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before serving.

Symptoms of Salmonella:

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Diarrhea

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Source: www.cdc.gov

CDC Public Information

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