

## What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is a diarrheal disease caused by an infection with bacteria of the species *Salmonella*. *Salmonella* is found in the digestive tracts of humans and many kinds of animals, including mammals, birds and reptiles.

## What are the symptoms of salmonellosis?

The symptoms of salmonellosis include diarrhea, fever, stomach cramps, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms usually begin from six hours to three days after infection. The illness usually lasts about four to seven days, but can last as long as two weeks.

## How does someone get salmonellosis?

Most infections are caused by eating food contaminated with *Salmonella*. The contamination is from the feces of infected humans or animals. Contaminated foods are often of animal origin. These include raw or undercooked eggs and egg products, raw or unpasteurized milk and milk products, poultry, and beef. Bacteria from contaminated foods can be transferred from utensils, cutting boards, and other kitchen surfaces to other uncooked foods. This is called cross-contamination. Cross-contamination of raw or uncooked food items such as fruits and vegetables with *Salmonella* is another well-known cause of illness. Direct contact with infected animals, especially those with diarrhea, is another way *Salmonella* may be spread. *Salmonella* may be found in the feces of a wide range of domestic animals, reptiles, and livestock such as dogs, cats, iguanas, tortoises, turtles, snakes, chicks, cattle, poultry, and swine.

## Is there any treatment for salmonellosis?

Most people recover from *Salmonella* infections within one week and often do not require treatment. Anyone experiencing diarrhea should drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration, especially small children and the elderly. Persons with severe or prolonged diarrhea should seek care from a health care provider. Antibiotics are rarely necessary.

## Should someone go to work or school, or send a child to daycare with salmonellosis?

*Salmonella* may be transmitted from person to person. Children should not attend daycare until 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped. People who handle food should NEVER work while they are still having diarrhea. People in these settings should wash their hands carefully and often, especially after using the bathroom.

## What can be done to prevent salmonellosis?

1. Always treat raw poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly:
  - Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags while purchasing to prevent blood from dripping on other foods during transport and storage.
  - Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize holding at room temperature.
  - Cutting boards and counters used for preparation should be washed immediately after use to prevent cross-contamination with other foods. Another method to cross-contamination is to keep separate cutting boards for meats and for fruits and vegetables.
  - Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats.
  - Rotate food in a microwave to avoid “cold spots” where bacteria can survive.
  - Use a food thermometer to confirm appropriate internal temperature when cooking or reheating. Check food in the thickest part of the item. All reheated leftover items such as casseroles should reach 165°. Ground meat such as hamburgers should be cooked to at least 160°. Cuts of beef should be cooked to 145°F, poultry should be cooked to 165°F, and fish should be cooked to 145° or until opaque and easily flakes with a fork. Heat soups, sauces and gravies to a boil.
2. Cook eggs until the yolk is firm, and thoroughly cook foods containing raw eggs. Raw eggs can contain bacteria and eating raw eggs can cause illness.
3. Avoid drinking raw milk.

4. Encourage careful handwashing with soap and water before and after food preparation and during preparation to prevent cross-contamination.
5. Supervise handwashing in children, particularly after touching animals.
6. People working with animals should have separate work and non-work clothes, and should remove shoes or clothes contaminated with animal manure before coming indoors. Remember good handwashing after touching pets and animals.
7. Do not keep reptiles as pets in homes with immunocompromised persons or young children.

