

Salmonellosis

FACT SHEET

What is Salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is an infection of the intestine with bacteria called *Salmonella*. The effects of the disease can range from mild to severe. In the worst cases, the disease spreads to the blood stream and can cause death. *Salmonella* live in the intestines of humans and other animals, including birds. *Salmonella* are usually transmitted to humans by eating foods contaminated with animal stools. Contaminated foods usually look and smell normal. *Salmonella* may also be found in the stool of some pets, especially those with diarrhea. People can become infected if they do not wash their hands after contact with the stool. Most reptiles (90%) shed salmonella in their stool.

Who Can Get Salmonellosis?

Anyone can get *Salmonella*. People who are most likely to get a severe infection include the elderly, infants and those with weak immune systems, such as people with HIV infection.

What are the Symptoms?

The symptoms usually begin 12 to 36 hours after infection but can occur from 6 to 72 hours, and include:

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting

What is the Treatment?

Usually salmonella infections do not need to be treated. The person generally recovers in about 5 to 7 days. In some severe cases, people need to be treated in a hospital to receive fluids and antibiotics.

How Can You Prevent Salmonellosis?

You can prevent a salmonella infection by:

- Washing hands with soap and water after using the toilet, changing diapers, touching pets, and before and after handling foods.
- Eating only well cooked meats, poultry, or eggs; and washing hands after touching these uncooked foods.
- Avoiding unpasteurized milk or cheese.
- Keeping raw foods away from cooked foods by washing cutting boards, utensils, and hands, and throwing out used packages.
- Keeping raw foods separated from cooked foods by washing cutting boards and utensils after use and not reusing meat trays or other packaging.