

## **SALMONELLOSIS FACT SHEET**

### **What is Salmonellosis?**

Salmonellosis is an infection with Salmonella bacteria. This infection usually causes a gastro-intestinal illness.

### **How can you be exposed to Salmonella?**

Salmonella bacteria are usually passed on to humans by eating or drinking contaminated food or water. Contaminated foods are often of animal origin, such as poultry, beef, milk or eggs, but any food, including vegetables, may become contaminated. Thorough cooking kills Salmonella.

A person can also be exposed to Salmonella by contact with feces of some pets such as turtles, lizards, snakes, chicks/chickens and young birds. Always wash your hands after touching animals and reptiles.

### **What are the symptoms of Salmonellosis?**

The most common symptoms are diarrhea, dehydration (fluid loss), abdominal cramps, and fever. Although rare, the infection can become more serious if the bacteria move outside the gastro-intestinal tract, into the blood stream or other parts of the body (bones, brain or other organs).

### **How soon after infection do symptoms occur?**

People infected with Salmonella can develop symptoms 6 to 72 hours after exposure. Most people will become ill within 12 to 24 hours after being exposed. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and people generally recover without treatment. However, in some persons, diarrhea may become serious enough for the person to be hospitalized. The elderly, infants, and those with weak immune systems are more likely to have a serious illness.

### **What is the treatment for Salmonellosis?**

Typically, people recover on their own without medication within 7 days. Antibiotics and anti-diarrheal medicine are not usually necessary for mild infections. Some people (especially children) may require fluids to prevent dehydration. Contact your health care provider if diarrhea is severe.

### **How can Salmonellosis be prevented?**

The most important way to prevent infection is proper hand washing with soap and water. You should wash hands:

- Before and after handling foods.
- After using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- After contact with animals.

When handling foods:

- Never prepare foods for other people if you have diarrhea.
- Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Wash cutting boards, counters and utensils used for meat/poultry preparations immediately to avoid contaminating other foods.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, or meats.
- Refrigerate food promptly and properly.
- Drink only pasteurized milk.

### **Where can I get more information?**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)

### **Source of Information**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

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