

Salmonellosis General Information

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 food 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 salmonellosis. 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.

How is it spread?

You can get Salmonellosis by:

- Eating contaminated foods that have not been cooked properly or are eaten raw. Some common food sources of *Salmonella* include:
 - raw and undercooked meat (especially poultry)
 - raw or undercooked eggs
 - homemade salad dressings, hollandaise sauce, mayonnaise, ice cream, cookie dough, tiramisu and frostings where raw eggs are used as an ingredient
 - raw fruits and vegetables (especially sprouts and cantaloupes) and their juices
 - unpasteurized dairy products, such as raw milk and raw milk cheeses, cream-filled desserts and toppings
 - unpasteurized fruit juices and ciders
 - fish and shrimp
- Contact with infected animals, chicks and exotic pets like snakes, turtles and reptiles commonly carry salmonella bacteria.

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?

- Use a thermometer to ensure all foods have reached the [required internal cooking temperature](#) and reheat all food to an internal temperature of 74°C [165°F].
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly with clean, safe running water before you prepare and eat them.
- Keep raw meat in a refrigerator at or below 4°C [40°F] and separate from ready-to-eat foods during thawing and storage.
- Thoroughly clean work surfaces and utensils used to prepare raw meat and other foods before using them to prepare foods that are cooked lightly or ready-to-eat.
- Adequately wash hands before preparing food and after handling raw meat, using the bathroom, changing diapers, handling garbage and handling pet food and treats.
- Eat and drink only pasteurized juice, cider, milk and milk products.
- Persons infected with salmonellosis or any other gastrointestinal illness should not prepare or serve food to other people or provide personal care for other people.
- Wash hands after handling all pets, especially chicks and exotic pets like snakes, turtles and reptiles.
- Keep pets away from food storage and preparation areas and adequately wash hands after handling pet feces and cat litter.
- When travelling, in particular in developing countries, drink water (including ice) from a safe source. Eat only cooked hot food. Eat only fruit that can be peeled.

For further education please refer to Health Canada's Healthy Canadians [Salmonella and Salmonellosis](#) website and the Public Health Agency of Canada's [Salmonella Fact Sheet](#).