



Central Michigan District Health Department
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

For more information, call your local CMDHD branch office:

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www.cmdhd.org

Salmonella

What is Salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is a disease caused by a bacterial germ that gets into the intestines. Once there, it begins to reproduce. People begin to feel the effects – mainly abdominal cramping and diarrhea – some 6 to 72 hours later. The speed with which illness develops depends on the amount of germs eaten. The bacteria can be found in raw eggs, raw (unpasteurized) milk, meat, poultry (chicken, turkey), and pet turtles, iguanas and chicks. The germ can be spread to people by eating food with the germ in it or by infected people who don't wash their hands after going to the bathroom or changing the diaper of an infant with this illness.

How can I tell if I have Salmonellosis?

Often a person with Salmonellosis will have these signs:

- * headache
- * fever
- * nausea and vomiting
- * diarrhea (many loose bowel movements)
- * stomach aches

Sometimes a person may have the Salmonellosis germ but not feel sick. Most people will continue to secrete the germ in their stools for a period of time from 4 days up to 3 weeks.

What should I do if I have Salmonellosis?

- 1) It's hard to tell if your diarrhea and other signs are caused by the germ. The only way to find out is to see your doctor. You may be asked to bring a sample of your bowel movement (stool). It will be checked for the germ. Your doctor may also need a sample of your blood if you have the disease.
- 2) Most healthy people overcome Salmonellosis without any treatment. To make sure the germ is gone, your doctor may need more bowel movement samples from you. Be sure to follow the doctor's instructions carefully if you are given medication.
- 3) Generally speaking, people who do not handle food can return to work as soon as symptoms subside. People in certain occupations, such as cooks, health care workers, daycare or nursing home personnel often cannot return to work until their stools are negative for the organism.
- 4) If you have diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and stomach aches, you will want to avoid big meals of solid foods. Instead, you should eat foods like jello, broth, tea, and clear juices until these signs go away.
- 5) If your child has Salmonellosis, your doctor may tell you to keep him or her away from other children until the bowel movement samples do not have the germ in them.
- 6) Other family members may need to be checked for the germ.

- 7) Wash all clothing, sheets, and diapers soiled by a baby who has Salmonellosis in hot soapy water. Dry these items in the dryer.
- 8) Wrap disposable dirty diapers so that they are completely covered. Put them in a plastic bag and then in a garbage can with a tight lid.
- 9) Children's toys and floors they crawl on should be kept clean to avoid spread of the germ. Wash the toys and play surfaces with hot soapy water or a solution of 1 quart water with 4 drops of 4% to 6% household chlorine bleach (Clorox). Be sure to rinse off the toys and floor with clear hot water after cleaning them.
- 10) Wash your hands often with hot soapy water.
- 11) Food must be handled and prepared in a safe manner. Cooked foods should be heated to an internal temperature of at least 165°F. Foods should also be cooled rapidly to a temperature below 41°F.
- 12) Infection with Salmonella is reportable to the health department. Someone from your local health department will call you and review what you had eaten the last three days prior to your illness.
- 13) When visiting petting zoos, make sure to wash your hands after touching animals and before eating.
- 14) Ducklings, chicks, turtles and reptiles may also increase the risk of salmonella. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling.

Prevention

- Refrigerate eggs below 41°F. Cook for 15 seconds at 145°F. Avoid eating raw eggs, such as in cookie dough or egg nog.
- Separate uncooked meats from produce and other cooked meats to prevent bacteria transfer.
- ALWAYS wash hands after handling uncooked foods, being in contact with animals, after going to the bathroom and after changing diapers.