

Salmonellosis

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacteria that can cause food-borne infection called Salmonellosis. Symptoms include sudden onset of fever, headache, diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Symptoms can occur from 6 to 72 hours after becoming infected.

How is Salmonellosis spread?

Salmonella infection is spread by eating food contaminated by feces of an infected animal or person, or by drinking contaminated water. It can also be spread from person-to-person. Proper hand washing and safe food handling are key to preventing food-borne illnesses such as Salmonellosis. Proper hand washing includes soap and water for at least 15 seconds. Safe food handling information can be found at TBDHU.com/eh

Where is Salmonella found?

Salmonella is found in domestic and wild animals, including poultry, wild birds, swine, cattle, and rodents. Reptiles such as iguanas, bearded dragons, turtles, and domestic pets such as chicks, dogs and cats may harbour the bacteria. Humans are carriers of certain types of salmonella.

How are Salmonella outbreaks caused?

Outbreaks have been caused by inadequately cooked poultry and poultry products, uncooked or lightly cooked foods containing egg and egg products, raw milk and dairy products including dried milk. Foods have been contaminated with feces from infected food handlers. Salmonella infections have been caused by foods such as meat and poultry products processed or prepared with contaminated utensils or on contaminated work surfaces.

Salmonella outbreaks have also been linked to raw fruits and vegetables (including sprouts) and unpasteurized milk and milk products such as raw milk cheese.

Contaminated water supplies can also cause salmonella infections. Fecal-oral transmission may be the cause when diarrhea is present in infants.

How can you prevent Salmonellosis?

- Wash hands thoroughly before, during and after food preparation. Use soap and water for at least 15 seconds.
- If you have diarrhea do not prepare food, care for hospitalized patients, the elderly or children.
- Cook ground poultry and poultry pieces to a minimum temperature of 74°C (165°F). Whole poultry must be cooked to 82°C (180°F). Cook other ground meats to 71°C (160°F). Use a probe thermometer to verify cooking temperatures.

.../2

- Place cooked foods on clean surfaces to prevent recontamination.
- Do not leave food at room temperature for longer than two hours.
- Use only pasteurized milk and milk products.
- Thoroughly cook eggs. Do not consume raw eggs or inadequately cooked eggs (over easy, or sunny side up). Do not use an egg if it appears that the shell has been broken or damaged before you handle it.
- Avoid eating raw eggs (as in homemade ice cream or eggnog). Commercially manufactured ice cream and eggnog are made with pasteurized eggs.
- Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables before eating them.
- When buying, preparing and storing food, keep raw meats separate from fruits, vegetables, cooked foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- Reptiles have been associated with Salmonellosis; always wash your hands after handling them. Reptiles, including turtles, are not appropriate pets for children.

Who is at a higher risk?

Salmonella infections can be serious in infants and young children, pregnant women and their unborn babies, and older adults, who are at a higher risk for food-borne illness, as are people with weakened immune systems (such as those with HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, and transplant patients).

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Public Health Division.

**For further information contact the Infectious Disease Program at 625-8318
or toll free 1-888-294-6630, ext. 8318.**