



**Louisiana Office of Public Health
Infectious Disease Epidemiology
Section**

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Information on Salmonellosis Public Information

What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is a bacterial infection that generally affects the intestinal tract and occasionally the bloodstream. It is one of the more common causes of gastroenteritis. Most cases occur in the summer months and are seen as single cases, clusters or outbreaks.

What are the symptoms of salmonellosis?

People exposed to salmonella may experience mild to severe diarrhea, fever, and occasionally vomiting. Bloodstream infections can be quite serious, particularly in the very young and the elderly. Symptoms usually appear one to three days after exposure.

Who gets salmonellosis?

Any person can get salmonellosis but it more often is recognized in infants and children.

How are salmonella bacteria spread?

Salmonella are spread by eating or drinking contaminated food or water or by contact with infected people or animals.

Where are salmonella found?

Salmonella are widely distributed in our food chain and environment. The organisms often contaminate raw meats, eggs, and unpasteurized milk and cheese products. Other sources of exposure may include contact with infected pet turtles, iguanas, pet chicks, dogs and cats.

Do infected people need to be isolated or excluded from work or school?

Since salmonella are in the feces, only people with active diarrhea who are unable to control their bowel habits (infants, young children, for example) should be excluded from school or day care. Most infected people may return to work or school when their stools become formed provided that they carefully wash their hands after toilet visits. Special consideration must be given to food handlers, health care workers, and children in day care.

What is the treatment for salmonellosis?

Most people with salmonellosis will recover on their own or require fluids to prevent dehydration.

Antibiotics and anti-diarrhea drugs are generally not recommended for typical cases with intestinal infections.

How can salmonellosis be prevented?

1. Always treat raw poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly:
 - Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other foods.
 - Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize holding at room temperature.
 - Cutting boards and counters used for preparation should be washed immediately after use to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
 - Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats.
 - Ensure that the correct internal cooking temperature is reached-particularly when using the microwave.
2. Avoid eating raw eggs or undercooking foods containing raw eggs.
3. Avoid drinking raw milk.
4. Encourage careful handwashing before and after food preparation.
5. Make sure children, particularly those who handle pets, wash their hands carefully. Because of the risk of salmonella infection, turtles, lizards, and other reptiles should not be kept as pets in child care centers.