

***Salmonella* Infection (salmonellosis)**

What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis (sal-mohn-el-OH-sis) is a bacterial disease caused by the bacterium *Salmonella*. Many different kinds of *Salmonella* can make people sick. Most people have diarrhea, fever, and stomach pain that start 1 to 3 days after they get infected. These symptoms usually go away after 1 week. Sometimes, people have to see a doctor or go to the hospital because the diarrhea is severe or the infection has affected other organs.

Can animals transmit salmonellosis to me?

Yes, many kinds of animals can pass salmonellosis to people. Usually, people get salmonellosis by eating contaminated food, such as chicken or eggs. However, animals can carry *Salmonella* and pass it in their feces (stool). Therefore, people can also get salmonellosis if they do not wash their hands after touching the feces of animals. Reptiles (lizards, snakes, and turtles), baby chicks, and ducklings are especially likely to pass salmonellosis to people. Dogs, cats, birds (including pet birds), horses, and farm animals can also pass *Salmonella* in their feces. Reptiles account for approximately 7% of the salmonella cases in the United States.

Some people are more likely than others to get salmonellosis. A person's age and health status may affect his or her immune system, increasing the chances of getting sick. People who are more likely to get salmonellosis include infants, children younger than 5 years old, organ transplant patients, people with HIV/AIDS, and people receiving treatment for cancer.

How can I protect myself from salmonellosis?

- After contact with animal feces (stool), wash your hands with soap and running water.
- Wash your hands with soap and running water after touching reptiles or any objects and surfaces that a reptile has also touched.
- If you have a compromised immune system, avoid contact with reptiles. Children younger than 5 years old should be supervised while interacting with animals.
- Children should not be allowed to kiss pets or to put their hands or other objects into their mouths after handling animals.
- Childrens' hands should be washed thoroughly with running water and soap after contact with animals.
- Hand washing prior to breast feeding or preparation of formula is strongly recommended.