

### What is it?

Salmonellosis is a food-borne infection caused by the bacteria *Salmonella*. These bacteria grow in the small intestine and invade the gut lining.

### What are the symptoms?

Typical symptoms include the sudden onset of cramps accompanied by headache, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fever and chills. Dehydration is possible in cases where there is severe diarrhea. The illness can last from several days to several weeks. Most people are ill for 4-7 days and recover without treatment. In a small number of cases *salmonella* infection can be dangerous and can be life threatening to infants, children, the elderly or people with immune system disorders. Symptoms can appear 6 to 72 hours after swallowing the bacteria, though 12 to 36 hours is the most common.

### How is Salmonellosis spread?

*Salmonella* bacteria are commonly found in the intestine of livestock, poultry, cats, dogs, rats, turtles, exotic pets (i.e. iguanas) and other animals. It has also been found in egg and egg products and on unwashed fruits and vegetables. Any raw meats or poultry may carry *salmonella*. If these foods are not cooked properly, the bacteria can survive to cause illness when these foods are eaten. Contaminated water supplies have also caused illness. Fecal-oral transmission through poor hand washing may be the cause when diarrhea is present in infants. *Salmonella* infection can pass from person to person. The bacteria are passed in the stool (feces) and make their way to another person on unwashed hands, contaminated food or objects. The bacteria can then be swallowed by another person, making them ill.

### How can you prevent Salmonellosis?

- Thorough hand washing is the best prevention. Make sure hands are properly washed after using the toilet, changing diapers, handling animals, or before and after preparing foods.
- Cook ground poultry and poultry pieces to a minimum internal temperature of 74° C (165° F) for at least 15 seconds. 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.
- Place cooked foods only on clean surfaces to prevent re-contamination.
- Do not leave food at room temperature for longer than two hours. Keep cold foods at 4° C or lower and hot foods at 60° C or higher.
- Use only pasteurized milk and milk products.
- Do not consume raw eggs or under-cooked eggs (such as eggs over easy or sunny side up). Do not use raw eggs in egg-nogs and homemade ice cream. Do not use cracked or dirty eggs.
- Drink water from a safe supply. Have your well water tested to ensure it is safe to drink.
- Turtles, chicks, ducks and exotic pets may carry *salmonella* and are not suitable pets for young children.
- Do not prepare or handle food if you are ill with diarrhea.

*Continued...*

## References

- Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, Salmonellosis.
- Heymann, D. L., (2008). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual* (19th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.

## Other Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or call our Communicable Disease Program at 613-966-5500 x349.

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