

# SALMONELLA

## PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

### *What is Salmonella?*

*Salmonella is a bacterial germ that gets into the intestines and causes illness. The bacteria can be found in raw eggs, raw (unpasteurized) milk, meat, poultry (chicken, turkey), and pet turtles, chicks, snakes, iguanas and lizards.*

### **How is it spread?**

Most types of Salmonella live in the intestinal tracts of animals and birds and are transmitted to humans by contaminated foods, such as beef, poultry, milk, or eggs. Salmonella bacteria are also shed in the feces of infected individuals and unless there is proper hand-washing after bowel movements, the bacteria can be spread from contaminated hands to food during preparation. Salmonella may also be found in the feces of some pets, especially reptiles and those with diarrhea, and people can become infected if they do not wash their hands after contact with these feces. If you have been exposed to the bacteria, you may develop symptoms 12 to 72 hours after infection.

### **How is it treated?**

Salmonella is usually diagnosed by checking stool samples. Salmonella infections usually resolve in 4-7 days and often do not require treatment. Medication is only given in certain situations or if you become severely dehydrated. To make sure the infection is gone you may have to submit another stool sample. If you are a food-handler, or work at or attend a day care you may be excluded until symptoms are gone and a stool culture is normal. Occasionally, salmonella can be shed in stool for several weeks or months after symptoms resolve.

### **How can we prevent Salmonella?**

- Do not eat raw eggs or raw (unpasteurized) milk.
- Throw away cracked eggs because they may have the germ in them.
- Cook meat well before eating it. Put cooked meat into a refrigerator right after a meal.
- Scrub cutting boards, counters, and utensils with hot soapy water after contact with raw or cooked meat, poultry or eggs.
- Wash your hands and your children's hands after using the bathroom, after changing diapers, before eating, before and after making food, between handling food items, and after playing with animals.

### **SYMPTOMS OF SALMONELLA**

Often a person with Salmonella may have:

- headaches
- nausea and vomiting
- abdominal pain
- fever
- diarrhea

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