

# PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN  
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

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## Salmonella

### What is Salmonella?

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

### What are the symptoms of Salmonella?

- Often a person with Salmonella will have these signs/symptoms:
- headache
- nausea and vomiting
- stomach ache
- fever
- diarrhea (three or more loose bowel movements in 24 hours). Sometimes a person may have the Salmonella germ but not feel sick.

### How is Salmonella spread?

The germ is spread to people by eating food with the germ in it or by people who don't wash their hands after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, or working with raw eggs/poultry.

If you have Salmonella and don't wash your hands, you can give the disease to others. You must wash your hands.....

- after using the bathroom
- after changing diapers
- before and after making food
- before eating
- after playing with pets

Little children have a greater chance of getting this disease because they have not yet learned to wash their hands properly.

### What should be done if these symptoms are found?

- 1) It's hard to tell if diarrhea and other signs are caused by this germ. The only way to find out is to see a doctor. You may be asked to bring a sample of your stool (bowel movement). It will be checked for the germ. The doctor may also need a sample of blood if you have the disease.
- 2) The germ usually goes away by itself; medicine is given only in rare situations. To make sure the germ is gone, the doctor or health department may need more stool samples. Be sure to follow the doctor's instructions carefully if you are given medicine.
- 3) If you have diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and stomachaches, you will want to avoid big meals of solid foods. Instead, you should eat things like Jell-O, clear broth, tea, and clear juices until those signs go away.

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- 4) If your child has Salmonella your doctor may tell you to keep them away from other children until the stool samples do not have the germ in them.
- 5) Other family members may need to be checked for the germ.
- 6) Wash all clothing, sheets, and diapers soiled by a person who has Salmonella in hot soapy water. Dry these items in the dryer.
- 7) Wrap disposable dirty diapers so that they are completely covered. Put them in a plastic bag and then in a garbage can with a tight lid.
- 8) Children's toys and the floors they crawl on should be kept clean to avoid spreading the germ. Wash the hard surface, toys and play surfaces with hot soapy water, rinse with hot water, and disinfect with a bleach and water solution: Use a freshly prepared 1:100 dilution of common household bleach (approximately 1/2 cup bleach per gallon of tap water).  
*Note: Surfaces **must** be precleaned with detergent and water to remove visible material before using bleach solution. Apply bleach solution and let air dry.*
- 9) Wash your hands often with hot soapy water.

## **Are there complications from Salmonella?**

Yes. Sometimes the germ can cause other infections which can lead to serious illness. In some cases the diarrhea and vomiting can cause the body to lose a lot of fluids. This dehydration (loss of water) can be a problem for small children and infants or for the elderly. Infected food service workers, patient care workers, or day care workers should be off work until they are no longer infected.

## **How can I keep from getting Salmonella?**

- 1) Do not eat raw eggs or raw (unpasteurized) milk. Throw away cracked eggs because they may have the germ in them.
- 2) Cook meat well before eating it. Put cooked meat into the refrigerator right after a meal. Don't leave it on the counter to cool off. The germ may grow in meat that remains on the counter.
- 3) Scrub cutting boards, counters, and utensils with hot soapy water after contact with raw or cooked meat, poultry or eggs.
- 4) Wash your hands and your children's hands after using the bathroom, after changing diapers, before eating, before and after making food, and after playing with animals.

**For more information on Salmonella, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.**

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