

Salmonellosis

What is Salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis or *Salmonella* infection is caused by the bacteria *Salmonella*. There are many different serotypes of *Salmonella*. Those that most commonly cause human infection are *S. typhimurium* and *S. enteritidis*.

How is it transmitted?

Salmonella is naturally found in many wild and domestic animals such as swine, poultry, cattle, rodents, and pets such as iguanas, tortoises, turtles, terrapins, chicks, dogs, and cats. Transmission usually occurs by ingesting the bacteria in food produced from infected animals or food contaminated by feces of an infected animal or person.

What are the common symptoms?

There are usually 36 hours after infection until the onset of illness. Salmonellosis is associated with a sudden onset of one or more of the following: headache, abdominal pain, cramping, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and dehydration.

What are the symptoms in pets?

Many animals do not show any signs of infection. The most common symptoms if they were to occur include fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, and malaise.

What is the occurrence?

The rate of salmonellosis is highest in infants and young children and is more common in the summer than the winter. About 60-80 percent of all cases occur sporadically. It is estimated that about five million cases of salmonellosis occur in the United States annually. Only about 40,000 of those cases are reported due to the fact that many cases are mild and are not diagnosed. There are approximately 500-600 confirmed cases reported each year in Minnesota.

How are infections treated?

Salmonella infections usually resolve in five to seven days and often do not require treatment unless the patient becomes severely dehydrated or the infection spreads from the intestines. Antibiotics are usually not necessary. Recovery is usually complete, although it may be several

weeks before a patient's bowel habits are normal.

How can it be prevented?

- Avoid eating raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, or meat.
- Do not consume raw or unpasteurized milk or other dairy products.
- Thoroughly wash produce before eating.
- Avoid cross-contamination of foods. Uncooked meat should be kept separate from produce, cooked foods, and ready-to-eat foods.
- Hands, cutting boards, counters, knives, and other utensils should be washed thoroughly after handling uncooked foods.
- Wash hands after contact with animal feces and reptiles because they are likely to have *Salmonella*. Reptiles (including turtles) are not appropriate pets for small children and should not be in the house of an infant.
- Restaurant workers who have salmonellosis should not prepare food for others until they have been shown to be free of the bacterium.
- Do not let cats out if they hunt; they may feed on infected birds.

This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician or veterinarian for specific information related to you or your animals.

For more information go to:

www.cdc.gov

www.cvm.umn.edu