



What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is a bacterial infection that usually affects the intestines and occasionally the bloodstream. It is one of the more common causes of gastroenteritis with several hundred cases occurring in Arkansas each year. Most cases occur in the summer months and are seen as single cases, clusters, or outbreaks.

Who gets salmonellosis?

Any person can get salmonellosis, but it is recognized more often in infants and children.

How are Salmonella bacteria spread?

Salmonella bacteria are spread by eating or drinking contaminated food or water or by contact with infected people or animals.

What are the symptoms of salmonellosis?

People exposed to the Salmonella bacteria may have diarrhea, cramping, fever, nausea, vomiting, and headache. Some people may have very mild or no symptoms, but some infections can be quite serious, especially in the very young or elderly.

How soon after exposure does symptoms appear?

The symptoms generally appear 12 to 36 hours after exposure.

Where are Salmonella bacteria found?

Salmonella are found in many places in our food chain and environment. The bacteria often contaminate raw meats, eggs, unpasteurized milk and cheese products. Other sources may include contact with infected pet turtles, pet chicks, dogs, cats, and farm animals.

For how long can an infected person carry the Salmonella?

A person can carry the bacteria from several days to many months. Infants and people who have been treated with oral antibiotics tend to carry the bacteria longer than others do.

Salmonellosis Fact Sheet

Page 2

Do infected people need to be isolated or excluded from work or school?

Since Salmonella are in the stool, only people with active diarrhea who are unable to control their bowel habits (infants, young children, certain handicapped individuals, for example) should stay home. Most infected people may return to work or school when their stools become formed, provided that they carefully wash their hands after toilet visits. Food handlers, health care workers and children in day care must obtain the approval of the local or state health department before returning to their routine activities.

What is the treatment for salmonellosis?

Most people with salmonellosis will recover on their own. Some may require fluids to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics and drugs for diarrhea are usually not recommended for uncomplicated cases.

How can salmonellosis be prevented?

1. Always treat raw poultry, beef, and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly:
 - ◆ Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other foods.
 - ◆ Refrigerate foods promptly; don't hold at room temperature any longer than necessary.
 - ◆ Wash hands thoroughly after handling raw meat.
 - ◆ Cutting boards and counters used for preparation should be washed with soap and water immediately after use to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
 - ◆ Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats.
 - ◆ Make sure that the correct internal cooking temperature is reached—particularly when using a microwave.
2. Avoid eating raw eggs or undercooking foods containing raw eggs.
3. Avoid using raw milk.
4. Encourage careful handwashing after toileting, diapering, and before and after food preparation.
5. Make sure children wash their hands often, especially after handling pets.