

Salmonellosis

What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is an illness caused by *Salmonella* bacteria. There are more than 2,000 serotypes of *Salmonella* bacteria that can make people sick. Because there are so many serotypes, illness does not result in immunity.

Who gets salmonellosis?

Anyone of any age can become infected with *Salmonella* bacteria, but children, especially those less than 5 years old are the most likely to get salmonellosis.

How is salmonellosis spread?

People typically become infected by eating contaminated food or by having contact with an infected person or animal. The most common sources of infection are raw or undercooked poultry or eggs, and unpasteurized juice. Fresh fruits and vegetables can become contaminated with *Salmonella*. Other sources include contact with infected pet and livestock animals, such as cats; cattle; reptiles including turtles, frogs, lizards and snakes; and poultry including chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys.

What are the symptoms of salmonellosis?

Infection with salmonella bacteria causes diarrhea, abdominal cramps, vomiting and fever.

How soon after infection do symptoms appear and how long do they last?

Symptoms begin one to three days after being infected. Illness usually lasts four to seven days, and most persons recover without treatment. Young children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised are the most likely to have severe infections.

How long is a person able to spread salmonellosis?

Passing infection to another person is possible as long as bacteria are being shed in the stool. Anyone, especially a young child, may shed the bacteria for weeks to months. Those who have been treated with oral antibiotics tend to shed the bacteria longer, so use of antibiotics is based on the severity of the illness. Excellent handwashing is helpful in preventing the spread of illness.

What can be done to prevent the spread of salmonellosis?

- Do not eat raw or undercooked eggs, poultry or meat. Be aware that there may be raw eggs in homemade sauces, salad dressings and desserts.
- Wash and sanitize all cutting boards, surfaces and utensils after they have touched raw eggs, poultry or meat.
- Thoroughly wash hands after handling raw eggs, poultry and meat before handling other food products.
- People infected with salmonellosis should avoid cooking or serving food or drinks to others.
- Anyone who handles animals, especially animals with diarrhea, should wash their hands immediately afterwards. Children who handle animals may require close supervision to ensure that they have washed thoroughly.
- Wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and after changing diapers.

Is there a vaccine for salmonellosis?

There is no vaccine available to prevent salmonellosis.

For more information:

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