



Questions and Answers About **SALMONELLOSIS**



1. What is salmonellosis?

Sal-mo-nell-o-sis, a bacteria (germ) that affects the intestines, is one of the more common causes of diarrhea. Cases can occur anytime of the year. The name of the disease caused by Salmonella is called salmonellosis.

2. Who gets salmonellosis?

Anyone can get it, but it occurs more often in infants, younger children and the elderly.

3. How is the Salmonella germ spread?

The germs are found in the bowel movement (stool) of animals like chickens, turkeys, cows and pigs. Meat can be contaminated when the animals are slaughtered. Eggs may be contaminated even inside the egg. Raw (unpasteurized) milk may contain the germ. The germ is most common in turtles and lizards but other animals may carry the salmonella germ. The germs are spread by eating or drinking contaminated food or water or by contact with infected people or animals.

4. How do you know if you have salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis may cause mild or severe diarrhea, fever, nausea, abdominal pain, headache and body ache. It can be mild or very serious, especially in infants, younger children, persons with health problems and the elderly. The symptoms usually appear 1 to 3 days after contact with the germs, but may take up to five days.

5. How is salmonellosis treated?

Most people with the germ will get better on their own. Some people may need to replace fluids lost during their illness. Medications are not recommended for treating this infection because they may increase a person's risk of becoming a carrier.

6. Should infected people be restricted or excluded from work?

People with diarrhea who cannot control their bowels should decrease their daily activities and contact with others. Most infected people may return to work or school when their diarrhea stops, but they need to wash their hands carefully after using the toilet. While the symptoms last, people who handle food, children in day care, and health care workers should limit work or reduce school activities. Ask a Public Health Nurse for more information.

7. What can be done to prevent the spread of salmonellosis?

- Always handle raw poultry (especially chicken), beef and pork as if they are contaminated: wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent bloody liquid from dripping on other foods.
- Refrigerate foods promptly; do not let them sit out at room temperature.
- Immediately wash cutting boards and counters used to prepare raw foods to avoid spreading the germs to other foods.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked meats. Use a meat thermometer to make sure that the inside of the meat cooks at 165°F, and that there is no pink color remaining in the meat.
- Do not eat raw eggs or undercooked foods containing raw eggs.
- Do not drink raw (unpasteurized) milk.
- Do not eat alfalfa or other kinds of uncooked sprouts (e.g., clover, radish, etc.).
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after food preparation.
- Wash your hands before you eat.
- Wash your hands carefully after using the bathroom.
- Wash your hands after handling pets, especially turtles and lizards.

Source(s):

1. *Salmonellosis*. L.A. Department of Public Health. <http://www.lapublichealth.org/acd/>
2. *Salmonellosis*. California Department of Public Health. www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo
3. *Salmonellosis*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/diseasesconditions

For additional resources, please dial 2-1-1 or visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.