



Muskegon County Health Department

Salmonellosis Fact Sheet

What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is an intestinal infection caused by bacteria called “salmonella” which can produce diarrhea, abdominal cramps and fever. The illness usually lasts 4-7 days.

Although most people recover without treatment, some people (especially the very young, the very old, and those with poor immune systems) can become much sicker and require antibiotics.

How is salmonella spread?

Salmonella may be spread to humans by:

- Foods contaminated with animal feces
- Raw or undercooked meats, poultry, or eggs
- Unwashed fruits or vegetables
- Infected food handlers who do not properly wash their hands after using the bathroom
- Pet handlers who do not wash their hands after handling infected animals
- Reptiles such as turtles are particularly likely to carry salmonella

What are possible symptoms?

The beginning symptoms of salmonella infection usually occur within 12-72 hours after exposure.

General symptoms can include:

- Diarrhea
- Nausea /vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Fever
- Headaches

A small number of people infected with salmonella have joint pains, eye irritation, and painful urination, which is called Reiter’s syndrome. It can last for months to years, and may lead to chronic arthritis.

How is salmonella diagnosed?

Salmonella is diagnosed through a stool test. Follow up stool tests are often done to confirm that a patient is no longer infected.

What is the treatment for salmonella?

Salmonella infections usually resolve in 5-7 days. Antibiotics are usually not required unless the infection spreads from the intestine to other parts of the body. People with severe diarrhea may require IV fluids if they become dehydrated.

How can salmonella be prevented?

- Do not drink unpasteurized milk
- Throw away cracked eggs
- Prepare meat, poultry, or eggs away from other foods
- Wash your hands after handling meat
- Scrub cutting boards, counters, and utensils with hot soapy water after contact with raw or undercooked meat, poultry, or eggs
- Cook meat, poultry, or eggs well before eating
- Wash your hands and your children’s hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, before eating, and after playing with animals

For more information on salmonella:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/>

CDC Public Information

English	1-888-246-2675
Espanol	1-888-246-2857
TTY	1-888-874-2646