

# SALMONELLOSIS

## FACT SHEET

### What is Salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is an infection of the intestines caused by bacteria called Salmonella. Salmonella is actually a group of bacteria that can cause diarrheal illness in humans. They are microscopic living creatures that pass from the feces of people or animals to other people or other animals.

### Symptoms of Salmonellosis

Symptoms usually develop 6 to 72 hours after consuming infected food or drink. Symptoms typically last 4 to 7 days and can include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Headache
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Dehydration (fluid loss), especially among infants and the elderly

### Diagnosis and Treatment of Salmonellosis

Salmonella infection is usually diagnosed by a stool test. Most people recover without treatment. Antibiotics are sometimes used for people with severe illness. Antibiotics may also be helpful for young infants, people with certain chronic medical conditions such as cancer or sickle cell disease and for those with weak immune systems. It's important to drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration.

### How do people get Salmonellosis?

Because Salmonella bacteria leave the body in the stool, improper hand washing can lead to contamination. A person can also become infected with Salmonella by:

- Eating food or drinking water or milk that has been contaminated with Salmonella bacteria.
- Touching infected animals and then eating or touching the mouth without washing hands first. Infected animals often do not appear sick. Animals commonly infected with Salmonella include chickens, ducks, pigs, cows, rodents, and reptiles.
- Eating ready-to-eat foods that have been prepared with utensils, or on food preparation surfaces contaminated with Salmonella.

### How Can I Help Prevent the Spread of Salmonellosis?

- Wash hands with soap and warm water after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, touching animals, and before eating or preparing food.
- Cook all meats thoroughly—particularly poultry.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked eggs.
- Drink only pasteurized milk.
- Disinfect food-preparation surfaces and utensils after each use.
- People with diarrhea should not work as food handlers, care for children or provide health care.
- Children with diarrhea should not attend child care or school.



**For more information, contact a Public Health Nurse at the City-County Health Department at 454-6950 or visit [www.cchdmt.org](http://www.cchdmt.org) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**