

**What is it?**

Salmonella is a bacterium that causes sudden inflammation of the small intestine and colon.

**Caused by:**

Salmonella normally lives in the intestines of animals and birds. Eating foods that have been contaminated with animal feces (stool) can cause Salmonella illness. Pets, such as snakes, turtles and reptiles, may carry Salmonella even when healthy. People can become infected if they do not wash their hands after contact with animals.

**Symptoms:**

Some infected people do not experience symptoms. Other may have symptoms that include sudden headache, abdominal pain or cramps, followed by, diarrhea, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Young children and infants are susceptible to dehydration.

**Incubation:**

Symptoms develop between 6 to 72 hours after being infected, and usually last 4 to 7 days.

**Treatment:**

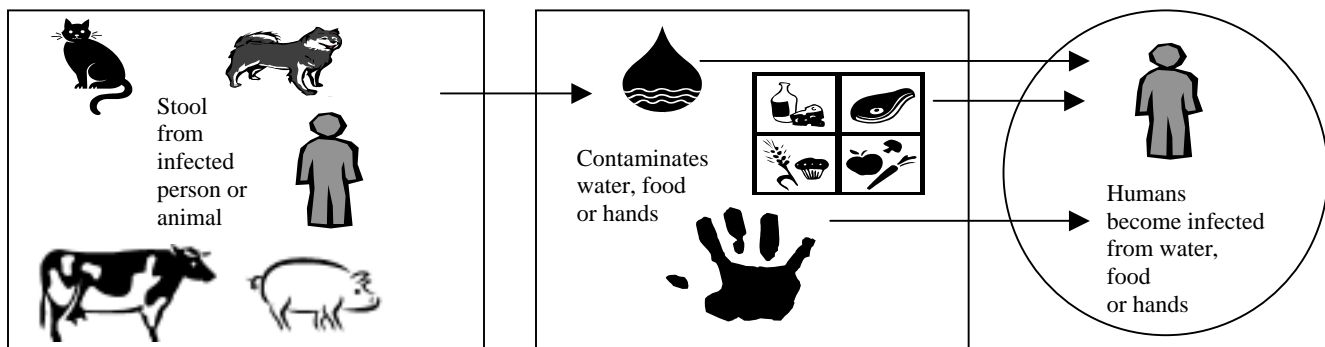
Most people recover without treatment. Those affected should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. More severe cases, infants under 2 months of age, the elderly, and people with limited movement or chronic illnesses may require antibiotics.

**Communicable:**

Salmonella is found in the feces (stool) throughout the illness and may still be excreted for several months after recovery. Therefore, handwashing is needed immediately after using the washroom and before handling food.

**Transmitted by:**

Salmonella is a “food-borne” infection, spread when people eat un-pasteurized (raw) milk, raw eggs and undercooked poultry or meats. Infected humans can also be a source, transmitting the illness from person to person through unwashed hands. People who are infected, but have no symptoms, can spread the illness too.



**Complications:**

In rare cases people can develop a reactive arthritis called Reiter’s Syndrome. People with Reiter’s Syndrome may have: joint pain, sore muscles, sore eyes, mouth sores, pain when urinating, and blurred vision.

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### **Other:**

Infants, children, food handlers and health care workers should remain at home until there has been no diarrhea for 24 hours.

### **Prevention:**

1. Proper handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent Salmonella. Make sure hands are washed with soap and warm water after using the toilet, handling pets, before preparing foods, and before eating.
2. Thoroughly cook all foods derived from animal sources, particularly poultry, egg products, and meat dishes. Cook meats to an internal temperature of 74° C (165° F). Cook poultry to an internal temperature of 82° C (179.6° F). Use a meat thermometer to ensure the proper temperature is reached. Any raw animal food such as: meat, poultry, eggs, un-pasteurized milk, fish and shellfish may carry Salmonella.
3. Cook stuffing separately. If poultry is cooked with the stuffing in it, make sure it is cooked until very well done.
4. Wash all raw fruits and vegetables before eating.
5. Keep raw meats away from cooked food and produce (fruits & vegetables).
6. Defrost food in the fridge or in cold water.
7. Refrigerate food immediately after grocery shopping.
8. Wash hands often when preparing food, especially after handling raw meat. Cutting boards, countertops, knives and other utensils should be washed and disinfected thoroughly after preparing uncooked foods.
9. Do not allow raw or cooked food to sit for long periods at room temperature. The “Danger Zone” temperatures are between 5° C and 60° C. These temperatures allow bacteria to survive and multiply again.
10. Prepare raw foods on washable surfaces. Avoid recontamination of cooked foods by placing them on a freshly cleaned and disinfected surface.
11. Avoid using raw eggs, as in egnogs or homemade ice cream, and never use dirty or cracked eggs.
12. Keep in mind that turtles, chicks, ducks, iguanas, salamanders and hedgehogs may be Salmonella carriers. These animals are not suitable pets for small children, and should not be in the same house as an infant. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after handling any pet.
13. Drink only pasteurized milk, and juices.
14. Drink water from a safe supply. Have well water tested to ensure it is safe to drink.
15. Do not prepare food or pour water for others if you have diarrhea.

#### Sources:

1. Heymann D.L. (Ed.). (2004). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual*, (18<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Public Health Association
2. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. *Salmonella Infection (Salmonellosis)*. Retrieved winter 2005, from [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenu/sub\\_salmonella.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenu/sub_salmonella.htm)
3. Health Canada. *Salmonella Prevention*. Retrieved winter 2005, from <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh/food/salmonella.html>

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