



Salmonellosis

What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is a food borne infection caused by *Salmonella* bacteria.

Symptoms include sudden stomach pain, diarrhea, fever, nausea and vomiting. Dehydration may be severe, especially among at risk groups including the elderly, infants, and those with a weakened immune system.

Symptoms usually occur within 6 to 72 hours and last 4 to 7 days.

How is salmonellosis spread?

The disease is spread through the “fecal-oral” route. Bacteria are shed in the feces of infected people or animals and can infect other people through poor sanitation or hygiene.

You can become ill if you eat or drink contaminated food or beverages, or if you come into contact with infected animals or environments contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria.

Salmonella can be found in a wide variety of foods, such as raw or undercooked meat, meat products and poultry, unpasteurized dairy products and raw or undercooked eggs. It can also be found in fruits and vegetables.

Cooked, ready-to-eat food can be contaminated when using the same cutting board, plate or utensil to prepare other food items, such as raw meat. Cutting boards, plates, utensils and other surfaces must always be washed and sanitized immediately

before cooked or ready-to-eat foods are placed on them.

How do I prevent salmonellosis?

- Always wash your hands after you use the bathroom or change a diaper.
- Some domestic animals and pets, such as chicks, ducklings, turtles, snakes and iguanas, can carry *Salmonella* bacteria. Wash your hands well after handling these animals or pets and help young children wash their hands. The same applies for visiting petting zoos.
- Do not prepare food if you have *Salmonella* or another infection that causes diarrhea.
- Wash your hands before, during and after preparing food.
- Thoroughly cook all foods that come from animal sources, particularly poultry, egg products and meat dishes.
- Cook meats and poultry to an internal temperature of at least 74°C (165°F). Use a meat thermometer to make sure the meat is cooked to the proper temperature. If turkey or chicken is cooked with stuffing in it, make sure that both the meat and the stuffing are well cooked to an internal temperature of at least 74°C (165°F).
- Thaw frozen foods fully before cooking, unless the food is marked “Cook from frozen”. Always thaw foods in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave.
- Use only pasteurized milk and milk products.

- Keep eggs refrigerated and do not use dirty or cracked eggs.
- Do not contaminate cooked or ready-to-eat foods: always place foods on clean, sanitized surfaces that have not been used to prepare other food.
- Do not let raw or cooked foods sit for a long time at room temperature.
- Be aware that eating the following foods will increase your risk of *Salmonella* infection: raw or under-cooked eggs or products containing raw eggs such as eggnogs, uncooked dough, desserts, sauces or homemade ice cream. To reduce your risk of *Salmonella* infection use liquid whole pasteurized egg products for these and other foods that are not cooked thoroughly.
- Be aware that eating raw or undercooked sprouts can put you at risk of *Salmonella* infection. If cooked properly, these are not a risk.
- Educate food handlers and persons who prepare food about the importance of the following food safety practices:
 - keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold;
 - wash hands before, during and after food preparation;
 - keep a clean kitchen; and
 - protect prepared foods from rodent contamination.

How is salmonellosis treated?

If you have been infected, you may be asked to answer detailed questions and to submit a fecal or stool sample (bowel movement).

Your health care provider may prescribe antibiotics if you have a severe case of salmonellosis, another chronic illness or a poor immune system.

For More Information

For more information see the following HealthLinkBC Files:

- [HealthLinkBC File #59a Food Safety: Easy Steps to Make Food Safe](#)
- [HealthLinkBC File #61b Petting Zoo and Open Farm Visits](#)
- [HealthLinkBC File #85 Hand Washing for Parents and Children](#)

To learn more about food safety, visit the Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education <http://befoodssafe.ca/>.

For information on the use of antibiotics, visit Do Bugs Need Drugs www.dobugsneeddrugs.org.

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles or your local public health unit.

Click on www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** for non-emergency health information and services in B.C.

For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance, call 7-1-1 in B.C.

Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.



BC Centre for Disease Control
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority