

What kind of infection is it?

Salmonella is a bacterial infection.

How do people get infected?

- *Salmonella* is a bacteria that lives in the intestines of birds (including chickens), reptiles (like snakes, lizards, iguanas, and turtles), amphibians (frogs), and mammals such as cows, pigs, and rodents.
- *Salmonella* infects persons of all ages but is most common in children younger than 4 years.
- Most infections come from eating undercooked food of animal origin, including: meat, poultry, eggs, or contact with reptiles or amphibians. *Salmonella* can get into other foods including fruits and processed foods during production or harvest.

What are the usual symptoms?

- Illness usually starts 12-72 hours after exposure.
- Diarrhea, sometimes with blood, stomach pain or cramps, headache, body aches, and fever.

How long does it last?

- Typically 3-7 days.

How is it treated?

- Prevent dehydration by drinking fluids. Most people will recover without treatment. Warning signs of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urination, or dizziness.
- Antibiotics do not help most people with *Salmonella* gastroenteritis and may lead to *Salmonella* remaining in the intestines longer.
- Antibiotics may be prescribed for young babies, those with cancer, sickle cell disease or severely weakened immune systems and for infections outside of the intestines.

Are there possible complications?

- Infection of the blood stream can occur in infants and people with sickle cell disease or weakened immune systems.
- *Salmonella* occasionally causes infections of bones, urine, or other parts of the body.

Comments:

- Wash hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers and before and after cooking. Cook meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly. Do not let uncooked meat or poultry touch food that will be eaten without cooking.
- Wash hands carefully after handling pet reptiles or rodents. Do not let babies or young children handle reptiles or rodents.
- People with diarrhea should not prepare food.

Resources:

- [CDC Handout](#)