

Salmonella

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a healthcare professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacteria that causes Salmonellosis - a foodborne illness. Salmonella bacteria multiply in the small intestine and invade the gut lining.

What are the symptoms of Salmonellosis?

Symptoms such as sudden stomach pain, diarrhea, nausea, fever, and throwing up are common. Dehydration, especially among infants, may be severe.

How is Salmonellosis spread?

Salmonella may be found in humans and animals (wild and domestic). Both humans and animals may have the bacteria and still appear healthy. *Salmonella* is commonly found in food such as raw eggs and egg products, meat and meat products, and poultry. Illness may occur after a person eats food or drinks water contaminated with *Salmonella*. *Salmonella* infections are frequently traced to poultry (chicken, turkey, etc) that has not been cooked enough, raw sausages, lightly cooked foods containing eggs or egg products, or to unpasteurized dairy products. Ready-to-eat or cooked food can also be contaminated by being touched by dirty hands, or by coming into contact with cooking utensils or counters that were not cleaned after being previously used.

Salmonella infections usually happen within 12 to 36 hours after eating contaminated food or water.

How do you prevent Salmonellosis?

- Always wash your hands after going to the toilet.
- 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 proper temperature is reached.
- Cook stuffing separately. If the bird is cooked with the stuffing in it, make sure that both the bird and the stuffing are well cooked to an internal temperature of at least 85°C (185°F). Wash the thermometer in between uses with hot soapy water to prevent cross contamination while verifying internal temperatures.
- Do not re-contaminate cooked foods. Place them on clean, sanitized surfaces which have not been used before to prepare other food.
- Do not let raw or cooked foods sit for a long time at room temperature.
- Do not use raw eggs, (e.g. eggnogs or homemade ice cream) and never use dirty or cracked eggs.
- Use only pasteurized milk and milk products.
- Educate food handlers and persons who prepare food about how important it is to:
 - 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 and insect contamination.

- Some domestic animals and pets, particularly chicks, ducklings and reptiles (turtles, snakes, iguanas), can be dangerous as pets for small children, because they often carry the *Salmonella* bacteria. Some pet treats have also been known to be contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria, so ask stores about pet treat recalls.

How do you control Salmonellosis?

- See your family doctor or your local community nurse for treatment.
- If local health officials think there is a salmonellosis outbreak in your community, they will conduct an in-depth investigation.
- If you have been infected you may be asked to answer detailed questions, and to submit a fecal sample (bowel movement).
- Do not let infected individuals handle food until their treatment is complete and the bacteria are no longer present.

Contact Information

For more information contact Yukon Communicable Disease Control at 667-8323. #4 Hospital Road, Whitehorse, Yukon

In the communities call toll-free 1-800-661-0408 extension 8323.

Adapted from BC HealthFiles