

Salmonellosis-Reptiles & Amphibians

❑ WHAT IS SALMONELLOSIS?

- ✓ Salmonellosis is an illness from the *Salmonella* bacteria, usually causing diarrhea, vomiting and fever.
- ✓ In children less than 5 years of age and persons with weakened immune systems, it can cause serious illness including infection of the bloodstream, central nervous system (meningitis), bones and joints.

❑ WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS AND SALMONELLOSIS?

- ✓ Reptiles (turtles, snakes, lizards, iguanas, geckos) and amphibians (frogs, salamanders, newts, toads) that carry *Salmonella* in their intestines without appearing ill can infect people.

❑ SYMPTOMS

- ✓ Symptoms usually develop 6 - 72 hours after bacteria are swallowed and often go away in 2 to 5 days. Symptoms include:
 - Diarrhea and stomach cramps
 - Fever, headache, body aches and chills
 - Nausea and vomiting (sometimes)
 - Dehydration, especially among infants and the elderly

❑ HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- ✓ *Salmonella* bacteria leave the body in the stool. If infected people do not wash their hands well after going to the bathroom, they can pass the bacteria to others.
- ✓ Infected persons can spread the bacteria even after their symptoms are gone.
- ✓ *Salmonella* is often spread by:
 - Contaminated food, water, or milk.
 - Food prepared by an infected food handler.
 - Food that was processed or prepared using contaminated cooking utensils, cutting boards or counter tops.

- Contaminated processed meat products.
- Inadequately cooked poultry, poultry products, eggs, or egg products.
- Unpasteurized milk and dairy products.
- Touching or cleaning the cage of an infected animal – other animals include poultry, swine, cattle, rodents, and pets such as chicks, ducklings, terrapins, dogs and cats.

❑ DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

- ✓ *Salmonella* infection can be diagnosed from a stool test.
- ✓ Most people get rid of the bacteria on their own without any treatment.
- ✓ Drink plenty of liquids (clean water, juices, and soup) to prevent dehydration (fluid loss).

❑ PREVENTION

- ✓ Wash hands well after going to the bathroom, after changing a diaper and before eating or preparing food.
- ✓ Cook food thoroughly—particularly meat, poultry, pork, and eggs.
- ✓ Drink only pasteurized milk.
- ✓ Refrigerate food promptly.
- ✓ Disinfect food-preparation surfaces and utensils after each use, as follows:
 - Use 1 tsp liquid household bleach per gallon of water.
 - Do not rinse.
 - Let air dry.
 - Prepare the bleach solution fresh daily.
- ✓ **People who have diarrhea should not work as food handlers or care for children or patients. Children who have diarrhea should not go to child care.**

**Report all King County cases to
Public Health by calling (206) 296-4774.**

Available in alternate formats.