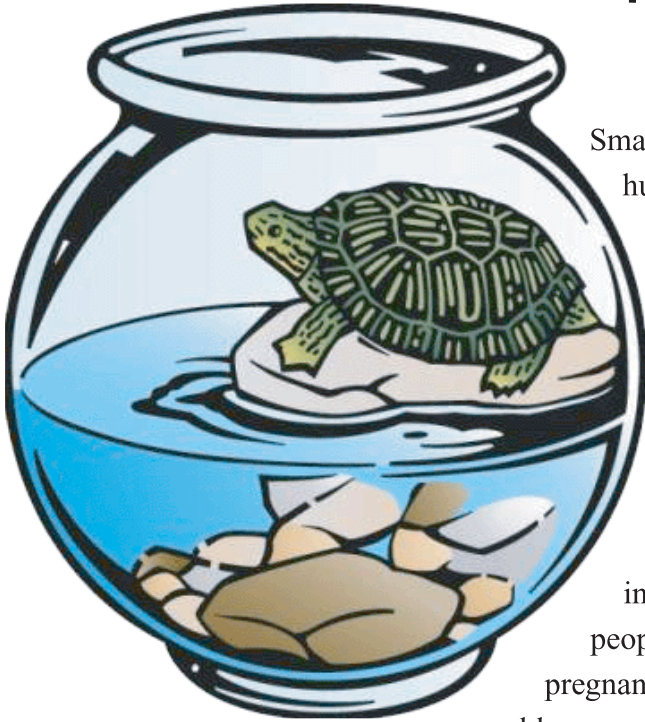


# ALERT TO PARENTS

## PET TURTLES MAY BE HARMFUL TO YOUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH



Small turtles are a source of a disease called salmonellosis in humans. Salmonellosis is an infection of the intestines caused by bacteria called *Salmonella*. Symptoms of the disease may include diarrhea, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, fever and headache. Symptoms begin in 6 to 72 hours (usually 12 to 36 hours) after a person is exposed to *Salmonella*, and they generally last for 2 to 7 days.

Anyone can get *Salmonella* infection, but the risk is highest in infants and young children as well as the elderly, and people who have lowered natural resistance to disease due to pregnancy, cancer, chemotherapy, organ transplants, diabetes, liver problems, or other diseases.

*Salmonella* are naturally occurring bacteria in turtles and those with *Salmonella* usually do not appear sick in any way. In addition, turtles do not shed *Salmonella* all of the time. So, just because a turtle might have one negative test for *Salmonella* doesn't mean that they are not infected. It could mean that the turtle was not shedding *Salmonella* on the day it was tested.

The sale of turtles with a carapace\* length of less than 4 inches has been banned in the U.S. since 1975 because of the public health impact of turtle-associated salmonellosis. This regulation is enforced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in cooperation with State and local health jurisdictions. Experts estimate that the regulation has prevented about 100,000 cases of salmonellosis per year. However, there has been an increase in the sale of turtles in recent years

### Alert to parents and other persons responsible for the care of children:

- The sale of small turtles for pets is illegal.
- Be alert for turtles in petting zoos, parks, child day care facilities, or other locations where children may be.
- If you come in contact or handle turtles or their housing, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

\*Thick shell that covers the back of a turtle

