

SALMONELLA INFECTION * **(SALMONELLOSIS)**

What is Salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is an infection with bacteria called *Salmonella* and is diagnosed by testing stools for the organism. It may be found in the blood stream of some patients but not always.

How is it spread?

Salmonella is classified as a foodborne disease because contaminated food is the predominate mode of transmission. However, fecal-oral person-to-person transmission also occurs especially when children are not toilet-trained. Some family members may not have symptoms but be infected and able to transmit the disease to others. These family members are considered carriers. Some domestic animals and pets, particularly chicks, ducklings, and reptiles (turtles, snakes, and iguanas), often carry the *Salmonella* bacteria and can pass it on to humans.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms are headache, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, sometimes vomiting, and fever is almost always present. Dehydration, especially in infants and the elderly, may be severe.

What is the incubation period and how long is it communicable?

The incubation period is 6 to 72 hrs with most occurring within 12-36 hrs. The individual is contagious throughout the course of the infection, usually several days to several weeks. A temporary carrier state occasionally continues for months and is prolonged by using antibiotics. A sensitivity study should be done to show which antibiotics will be effective in clearing the disease.

Can I prevent this disease?

The best prevention is to wash your hands vigorously with soap and water especially:

- After:** Toilet visits
- Cleaning up vomitus or diarrhea (use gloves)
- Handling diapers (use gloves)
- Handling soiled clothes or linens (use gloves)
- Contact with a symptomatic person
- Before:** Eating, preparing food

It is recommended to use spray bottles to apply the disinfectant (1 part bleach to 9 part of cool water to be prepared daily) to contaminated surfaces such as toilets, sinks, floors, tables, water fountains or any areas where a sick individual has been.

Salmonellosis is also prevented by thoroughly cooking all foods that come from animal sources, particularly poultry, egg products (do NOT consume raw cake batter, or use raw egg in eggnog and homemade ice cream) and meat dishes; keeping hot foods HOT and cold food COLD, only using pasteurized milk and milk products. Kitchen counters and cutting boards should be sanitized after use.

What should I do about it?

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians. This is **a reportable disease** and should be reported to the Santa Rosa County Health Department (SRCHD). Children and adults with this illness should be free of symptoms for a minimum of 24 hrs before returning to childcare/school/work. Sensitive workers need to be cleared by the SRCHD.

For more information, please contact the Santa Rosa County Health Department at 850-983-5200.

