

# Loss Control



FARMERS

## Information Bulletin

### Salmonella

Salmonellosis, or salmonella, is an infection caused by *Salmonella* bacteria. *Salmonella* infections are increasing in the United States. Many types of this bacteria cause disease in animals and people. While the occurrence of different types of *Salmonella* varies from country to country, *Salmonella typhimurium* and *S. enteritidis* are the two most commonly found in the United States.

Salmonellosis may occur in small, contained outbreaks in the general population or in large outbreaks in hospitals, restaurants, or institutions for children or the elderly. While the disease is found worldwide, health experts most often report cases in North America and Europe. Every year, CDC receives reports of 40,000 cases of salmonellosis in the United States. However, the agency estimates that 1.4 million people in this country are infected and that 1,000 people die each year with salmonellosis. Symptoms are most severe in the elderly, infants, and people with chronic conditions. People with AIDS are particularly vulnerable to salmonellosis, often suffering from recurring episodes.

#### How is foodborne *Salmonella* transmitted?

*Salmonella* bacteria can be found in food products such as raw poultry, eggs, and beef, and sometimes on unwashed fruit. Food prepared on surfaces that previously contained raw meat or meat products can, in turn, become contaminated with the bacteria. This is called cross-contamination. In the past few years, CDC has received reports of several cases of salmonellosis from eating raw alfalfa sprouts grown in contaminated soil. *Salmonella* infection frequently occurs after handling pets, particularly reptiles like snakes, turtles, and lizards.

Salmonellosis can become a chronic infection in some

people who may not have symptoms. Though they may have no symptoms, they can spread the disease by not washing their hands before preparing food for others. In fact, health care experts recommend that people who know they have salmonellosis not prepare food or pour water for others until laboratory tests show they no longer carry *Salmonella*.

#### What are the symptoms of *salmonellosis*?

- *Diarrhea*
- *Fever*
- *Abdominal cramps*
- *Headache*

In most people, symptoms begin from 12 hours to 3 days after being infected. These symptoms, along with possible nausea, loss of appetite, and vomiting, usually last for 4 to 7 days. Diarrhea can be severe and require hospitalization.

#### How is it diagnosed?

A health care provider can use laboratory tests to identify *Salmonella* in the stool of an infected person.

#### How is *salmonellosis* treated?

Most cases of salmonellosis clear up within 5 to 7 days and don't require treatment. People with severe diarrhea may need intravenous fluids. If the infection spreads from the intestines into the bloodstream, health care providers can treat it with antibiotics such as ampicillin.

Ways to prevent foodborne *salmonellosis*.

- *Drink only pasteurized milk*

- *Cook poultry and eggs thoroughly*
- *Don't eat foods containing raw eggs, such as homemade Caesar salad dressing, cookie dough, and hollandaise sauce or drink homemade eggnog made with raw eggs*
- *Handle raw eggs carefully*
  - *Keep eggs refrigerated*
  - *Throw away cracked or dirty eggs*
- *Cook eggs thoroughly*
- *Cook poultry products to an internal temperature of 170 degrees Fahrenheit for breast meat and 180 degrees Fahrenheit for thigh meat*
- *Wash all food preparation surfaces and utensils that have come in contact with raw poultry or raw eggs with soap and hot water*
- *Wash hands immediately after handling raw poultry or raw eggs*
- *Wash hands immediately after handling reptiles or contact with animal feces*