



## Mecklenburg County Health Department

# Salmonellosis

*Salmonella* is a bacterial microorganism commonly found in animals, especially birds, pigs, and reptiles. The symptoms are fever, abdominal cramps, and diarrhea that generally will start 6 to 72 hours after exposure. The diarrhea from the illness usually lasts about 4 to 7 days and may be bloody. *Salmonella* enters the body through the mouth. Children can catch this infection by putting contaminated objects, such as toys or fingers in their mouths or by eating or drinking contaminated food or water.

Children can catch this infection by putting toys in their mouth or by sucking on their fingers. Outbreaks can occur in daycare rooms with diapered children. Almost all persons recover without antibiotic treatment. Some people become carriers and remain contagious for weeks to months.

To prevent *Salmonella* infection:

1. Wash all cooking utensils with soap and water after contact with raw foods of animal origin (eggs, meat, chicken, turkey, etc.)
2. Cook food thoroughly.
3. Refrigerate leftovers promptly.
4. Avoid spreading germs from one food to another by washing and sanitizing knives, cutting surfaces, and plates after contact with uncooked foods such as meat, poultry, or raw eggs.
5. Wash your and children's hands before touching food or ice.
6. Wash your and children's hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, swimming, or playing outside.
7. Wash your and children's hands after touching all types of animals (reptiles, birds, farm animals, dogs, cats, etc.). Wash your hands after washing animal cages. Do not wash animal cages or litter boxes in the kitchen.
8. Avoid contact with outside surface waters like creeks, streams, ponds, lakes, etc. If contact is made, wash hands thoroughly after contact.
9. Wash your hands after touching pet chews made of beef or pork. The FDA is recommending that elderly people, young children, and those with weakened immune systems avoid contact with pet chews made of beef or pork.
10. Always wash hands with soap and water.

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