

Fact sheet

Salmonella

<i>What is Salmonella?</i>	Salmonella is a bacteria that infects the digestive tract and may result in diarrhea, belly pain and a low fever. There are many species of Salmonella.
<i>How is it spread?</i>	Infected people may carry Salmonella in their intestines and feces. If someone is infected and they don't wash hands before preparing or sharing food it can be spread to others that eat the food. Some foods, like raw or under-cooked eggs or poultry (chicken), may be contaminated with salmonella, but thorough cooking will kill Salmonella. Pet turtles, snakes, iguanas, other reptiles, ducks, and chickens are a potential source of infection.
<i>What is the incubation period?</i>	Symptoms usually appear 6 hours to three days after contact with the bacteria.
<i>What are the early signs?</i>	Symptoms of Salmonella vary, but may include any combination of the following symptoms: loose or watery diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, headache and occasionally vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually low grade. Acute illness usually lasts 4-7 days.
<i>What about contacts?</i>	Encourage extra care with hand-washing (20-second scrub with warm, soapy water). Children with symptoms should be sent home.
<i>How long is the person contagious?</i>	Salmonella is contagious from the active stage of the illness until the bacteria are no longer present in the stool, usually several days.
<i>When is it OK to return to school/childcare?</i>	Children with active symptoms should remain at home until the symptoms go away for <i>at least</i> two days and the bacteria are no longer present in the stool.
<i>Other important information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the first sign of illness: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep your child at home 2. Call your child's doctor 3. Practice good hand-washing 4. Do not share food; no common bowls of popcorn or candy, etc. • Good hygiene controls the spread of disease; practice careful hand-washing after using the bathroom and before and after eating or preparing food. • Children with diarrhea may become dehydrated easily; they may need to drink more fluids (water, Gatorade) than normal.

This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5264 or 373-5267.