



SALMONELLOSIS

Salmonella is an illness caused by the bacterium Salmonella of which there are numerous types. Salmonellosis most commonly causes intestinal illness but occasionally may infect the blood stream. The bacterium is passed in the stool of infected individuals.

Who gets this disease?

Any person can become infected with Salmonella. The disease is more likely to cause a severe infection in the very young, the very old and in people with underlying diseases, such as cancer.

How is it spread?

In the childcare setting, Salmonella is usually spread by the fecal-oral route. The bacterium can also be spread by contaminated food or drink. It is commonly found in uncooked or undercooked meat (especially beef), poultry and eggs. Salmonella can also be spread to children and adults from infected pets such as turtles, lizards, snakes, dogs, cats, ducklings, chickens and other birds. (NOTE: Because of this hazard, these types of animals should not be in childcare facilities.)

What are the symptoms?

The intestinal illness caused by Salmonella is characterized by diarrhea (mild or severe), fever, abdominal cramps and occasional vomiting.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms generally appear from 12-72 hours after exposure, but can sometimes take up to 7 days to appear.

Can a person have this disease and not know it?

Yes. Some people may not have symptoms serious enough to cause them to seek medical attention. In some cases of Salmonella infection, after the diarrhea illness is over the organism may

be excreted in the stool for months to over a year. This is called the carrier state.

What is the treatment?

Although most people with Salmonellosis will recover on their own, in some cases healthcare providers may prescribe antibiotics. Some antibiotics may lengthen the amount of time the bacteria are found in the stool, however.

How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

1. Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet *and diapering children*.
2. Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food.
3. Be certain all foods in the childcare center are thoroughly cooked – especially beef, poultry and eggs.
4. Any leftover food should be discarded.
5. Food preparation surfaces (e.g., tables, counters, cutting boards, kitchen utensils) should be carefully washed and disinfected after preparing food.
6. Unpasteurized milk (goat or cow) is frequently contaminated with Salmonella and other bacteria; it should **not** be used in a childcare setting.
7. Staff with active diarrhea or gastrointestinal (GI) illness should not work in a childcare facility until they are free of symptoms for 48 hours.
8. Keep children with diarrhea at home.
9. High-risk animals like turtles and lizards should not be in child care settings.

Who should be excluded?

Infected persons shall be excluded from foodhandling, working in a child care facility and from direct care of hospitalized and institutionalized patients until they are no longer

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infectious or symptomatic (48 hours after resolution of symptoms).

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Reportable?

Yes. Salmonella is reportable by New Hampshire law to the Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Infectious Disease Investigation Section at (603) 271-4496 or 800-852-3345 ext. 4496.