

# **MANAGING YOUR SALMONELLOSIS**

## **What Is Salmonellosis?**

*Salmonella* is the name of a type of bacteria. Salmonellosis is an infection of the stomach and intestines that's caused by *Salmonella*. It's similar to stomach flu. Most people with mild infection get better in 4 to 7 days without treatment. An epidemic can occur when many people eat the same contaminated foods, such as at a restaurant. Some people have such severe diarrhea that they may need a hospital stay for intravenous fluids and antibiotics.

## **What Causes Salmonellosis?**

People get *Salmonella* infection by eating contaminated foods, especially eggs, beef, poultry, or fruit, or by drinking contaminated water or milk. Cooking helps reduce but does not eliminate chances of getting infected. *Salmonella* can spread among people when they don't wash their hands after going to the bathroom. *Salmonella* can also spread from pets, such as turtles and iguanas, to people.

## **What Are the Symptoms of Salmonellosis?**

Diarrhea is the main symptom. It may be mild, with two or three loose bowel movements (stools) daily. It may be severe, with watery diarrhea every 10 or 15 minutes. Other symptoms are blood in stool, stomach cramps, vomiting, fever, and headaches.

## **How Is Salmonellosis Diagnosed?**

The health care provider makes a diagnosis by testing stool, blood, and urine samples. Blood tests are also done to rule out other diseases.

## **How Is Salmonellosis Treated?**

Mild infections (gastroenteritis) don't usually need medicine. Most go away in 24 to 48 hours.

If possible, infected people should be isolated or at least use a separate bathroom. Good hand washing is essential to avoid spreading the infection.

People who have fever and more severe infection (typhoid fever) will need antibiotics.

Drinking more fluids helps prevent dehydration. A liquid diet including Gatorade® or Pedialyte® should be followed until diarrhea stops. Then, eating regular foods can slowly begin again. Dairy products can make the diarrhea worse and should be avoided for several days.

People with severe diarrhea may need intravenous fluids.

### **DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Salmonellosis**

- ✓ **DO** thoroughly cook food such as meat and poultry.
- ✓ **DO** handle and store food correctly. For example, don't let a salad with mayonnaise sit for hours at room temperature.
- ✓ **DO** drink only pasteurized milk.
- ✓ **DO** use only bottled water when traveling. Ask your health care provider about how to prepare if you're traveling to a developing country.
- ✓ **DO** avoid contact with anyone who has a *Salmonella* infection.
- ✓ **DO** avoid animals, such as pet turtles, that could be infected.
- ✓ **DO** wash your hands well after using the bathroom to avoid spreading the infection.
- ✓ **DO** drink watered-down electrolyte solutions, such as sports drinks, until diarrhea stops.
- ✓ **DO** eat a bland, high-calorie, well-balanced diet after diarrhea stops.

✓ **DO** call your health care provider if you're dehydrated (have dry wrinkled skin and dark or less urine).

✓ **DO** call your health care provider if you have symptoms longer than 48 hours, high fever, worse diarrhea, or yellow skin or eyes.

⊗ **DON'T** let others use the same bathroom unless it was thoroughly cleaned.

⊗ **DON'T** eat raw or undercooked poultry or eggs or drink unpasteurized milk.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Tel: (800) 232-4636; **Website:**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella>
- Intestinal Disease Foundation: Tel: (412) 261-5888; **Website:**  
<http://www.intestinalfoundation.org>

- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases: Tel: (866) 284-4107; Website:  
<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/salmonellosis/default.htm>

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