

Salmonella

This leaflet tries to answer some of the questions you might have about Salmonella.

What is it?

Salmonella are bacteria often found living in food, which can cause illness in people. With over 2,000 different types, *Salmonella* is one of the most common causes of food poisoning world-wide.

What are the symptoms?

You may have suffered:

- diarrhoea;
- sickness;
- a high temperature; and
- severe stomach pain.

The illness usually starts 12-36 hours after eating contaminated food. Even though others have eaten the same food they may not be ill.

What about the mess?

- If you have to clear up vomit or other mess, take care and wear rubber gloves. Scoop up what you can with a dustpan or paper towel. Rinse down a WC, don't use a sink that is used for food preparation or washing up. Wash what is left with cloths, and warm soapy water. Pour dirty water down a WC afterwards. Clean all cloths and equipment with dilute bleach (1 eggcup in a small bucket of warm (not hot) water);
- Wash fouled sheets and clothing straight away. (Before washing fold sheets and clothes so that you don't touch the dirty parts);

- Household hygiene is important, disinfect the WC area particularly the flush handle and basin taps and light switches. Ordinary bathroom cleaners are fine; and
- Make sure everyone uses his or her own towel and face cloth.

How did I catch it?

The usual way is eating or drinking anything containing *Salmonella* bacteria. As *Salmonella* comes from animals, eating foods like:

- raw and undercooked meat, poultry and eggs;
 - unpasteurised milk;
- are the most likely sources.

You can also get it from:

- infected people (especially if they handle food); and
- handling infected animals including pets and farm animals, also reptiles and amphibians

How long does it last?

The illness can last for three weeks, but is often over sooner.

How is it treated?

In most cases, symptoms clear without treatment, although to help young children and elderly people recover, occasionally their doctor may prescribe antibiotics.

It is important to keep drinking (clear fluids such as water or dilute squash are a good idea) to stop dehydration.

Can I give it to some one else?

It is possible to pass the illness on, but this is rare. Good personal hygiene will reduce the risk of passing it on to others

When can I go back to work/school/nursery?

If you work with food, are under 5 years old attending school/nursery or care for vulnerable people you should stay away until sickness and diarrhoea has stopped for 48 hours. You must still maintain good personal hygiene when you return.

What can I do to prevent getting it again?

1. Food

- If you are ill avoid preparing food for yourself or others;
- Make sure all risky foods such as meat, poultry and eggs are thoroughly cooked. Avoid dishes containing raw eggs;
- Be careful not to spread the organism from raw to ready-to-eat food such as cold meats and salad;
- Clean and disinfect worktops after preparing raw meat; and
- Make sure your fridge and freezer are working properly. The temperatures should be 1-4⁰C and minus 18⁰C respectively. (If you do not have a fridge thermometer, why not buy one).

2. Wash your hands

Everyone in the household (including children) should take care to wash their hands properly with soap and rinse them under running water after using the toilet and ...

- after you have cleared up vomit or diarrhoea;
- after you have been nursing ill people;
- after you have handled laundry or changed nappies;
- before you eat or cook; and
- often during the preparation of food (especially after handling raw meat and raw eggs).

As an extra precaution you can use an antibacterial soap.

For further information contact

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The Facts about Salmonella



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