



## FACT SHEET

### Salmonellosis – Reptiles & Amphibians

#### What is Salmonellosis?

- Salmonellosis is an illness from the *Salmonella* bacteria, usually causing diarrhea, vomiting and fever.
- In children less than 5 years of age and persons with weakened immune systems, it can cause serious illness including infection of the nervous system (meningitis), bones and joints.

#### What is the connection between reptiles and amphibians and salmonellosis?

- Reptiles (turtles, snakes, lizards, iguanas, geckos) and amphibians (frogs, salamanders, newts, toads) that carry *Salmonella* in their intestines without appearing ill can infect people.

#### Symptoms

- Symptoms usually develop 6-72 hours after bacteria are swallowed and often go away in 2 to 5 days. Symptoms include:
  - Diarrhea and stomach cramps
  - Fever, headache, body aches and chills
  - Nausea and vomiting (sometimes)
  - Dehydration, especially among infants and the elderly

#### How is it spread?

- *Salmonella* bacteria leave the body in the stool. If infected people do not wash their hands well after going to the bathroom, they can pass the bacteria to others.
- Infected persons can spread the bacteria even after their symptoms are gone.
- *Salmonella* is often spread by:
  - Contaminated food, water, or milk.
  - Food prepared by an infected food handler.
  - Food that was processed or prepared using contaminated cooking utensils, cutting boards or counter tops.

- Contaminated processed meat products
- Inadequately cooked poultry, poultry products, eggs, or egg products.
- Unpasteurized milk and dairy products.
- Touching or cleaning the case of an infected animal – other animals include poultry, swine, cattle, rodents, and pets such as chicks, ducklings, terrapins, dogs and cats.

#### Diagnosis and treatment

- *Salmonella* infection can be diagnosed from a stool test.
- Most people get rid of the bacteria on their own without any treatment.
- Drink plenty of liquids (clean water, juices, and soup) to prevent dehydration (fluid loss).

#### Prevention

- Wash hands well after going to the bathroom, after changing a diaper and before eating or preparing food.
- Cook food thoroughly – particularly meat, poultry, pork, and eggs.
- Drink only pasteurized milk.
- Refrigerate food promptly.
- Disinfect food-preparation surfaces and utensils after each use, as follows:
  - Use 1 tsp liquid household bleach per gallon of water.
  - Do not rinse.
  - Let air dry.
  - Prepare the bleach solution fresh daily
- **People who have diarrhea should not work as food handlers or care for children or patients. Children who have diarrhea should not go to child care.**

**Report all cases to El Paso Department of Public Health by calling 915-771-5810**