

SALMONELLA

Your Questions Answered

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EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a large group of bacteria that may cause food poisoning and gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestine). These bacteria are widely distributed in our food chain and environment

How do I know if I have Salmonella?

Diagnosis can only be confirmed by testing a sample of your faeces (stools). This is usually at the request of your doctor.

How is it spread?

Salmonella is often found in raw meat, eggs, and un-pasteurised milk. It is spread by eating and drinking contaminated food or water or by contact with infected people who may still have diarrhoea. Many animals, such as cattle, poultry, rodents and domestic pets (particularly turtles and terrapins) carry the bacteria.

What are the symptoms?

Diarrhoea, fever, stomach cramps and occasionally vomiting. The illness is rarely more serious but care should be taken with the very young or elderly.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear within 12 to 48 hours and may last for several days.

How long is a person able to spread the bacteria?

Most people will get rid of the bacteria completely within weeks. However some people may feel better within a few days but may still carry the bacteria in their gut and thus in their faeces for some months. Even though the person is showing no symptoms they may still spread the bacteria.

Do infected people need to stay away from work or school?

All cases of gastroenteritis are regarded as potentially infectious. All infected people should stay away from work or school until free from diarrhoea and vomiting (without medication) for at least 48 hours. Inform your employer, child carer or school as soon as possible to help them identify if they may have an outbreak.

If you belong to one of the following 'high risk' groups, additional precautions are needed & you have a duty to report your illness to your employer, child carer or school.

- food handlers involved with unwrapped or ready to eat food,
- staff of health care facilities in contact with food or patients,
- children aged below 5 years attending nurseries, playgroups, etc
- older children and adults who may find it difficult to carry out good personal hygiene

Infected people in these groups must not return to work, school or nursery until their symptoms have ceased and their bowel habits have been normal for at least 48 hours (without medication). This is provided that they wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.

It is very important to get in touch with us if you, or anyone else in your household, are in one of these 'high risk' groups. This is to enable us to give any necessary advice to halt the potential spread of the illness.

Visitors

It is strongly recommended you do not have any visitors (this includes friends, family and your children's friends) into your home until everyone within your home has fully recovered and the appropriate testing has confirmed the infection has totally cleared. This is particularly important for children under the age of 5 or older children/adults who are unable to carry out good personal hygiene.

How can I prevent it spreading??

Handwashing is the most important factor in preventing the spread of infection. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap under warm running water:

- AFTER using or cleaning the toilet
- AFTER touching anything contaminated by diarrhoea or vomiting
- AFTER attending to anybody who is unwell
- AFTER handling dirty laundry, clothing or bedding
- AFTER handling used nappies
- BEFORE handling, preparing, serving, or consuming food or drink
- AFTER touching animals during visits at farms, wildlife parks, zoos, pet corners, etc

People who are ill should ideally use anti-bacterial liquid soap and separate towels or disposable paper tissues. A nailbrush can assist you to clean under your fingernails. Always dry your hands properly as this helps to remove bacteria. Young children should be assisted to ensure they wash their hands properly.

Cleaning the toilet

For as long as people are unwell:

- Disinfect the toilet seat after each use, using a separate cloth
- Wash and disinfect other items like bedpans or potties after each use
- Disinfect the door handle, wash hand basin taps and flush handle after use
- Clean the toilet bowl using a (toilet) brush and disinfectant. Rinse the brush by flushing the toilet, and replace in its holder
- Keep any rubber gloves used for cleaning the toilet for this use only
- Flush the toilet with the seat and lid down

Laundry

- Dirty laundry from persons with food poisoning should be kept separate from other laundry
- If possible remove any heavy soiling into the toilet before washing
- Wash soiled clothing and bedding separately on as hot a washing programme as possible without exceeding fabric care instructions

Food Safety Points to remember

- ALWAYS keep raw meat separate from other foods
- ALWAYS cook meat thoroughly, including at barbecues. This is normally until the juices run clear
- AVOID eating or drinking untreated milk or dairy products, or drinking untreated water

REMEMBER TO WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY
ASSIST YOUNG CHILDREN TO WASH THEIR HANDS PROPERLY
MAKE SURE EVERYBODY FOLLOWS THESE PRECAUTIONS

Further advice is available by contacting your Doctor or from:

East Cambridgeshire District Council
Environmental Services
The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely, Cambs CB7 4EE
Tel: 01353 665555
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