

SALMONELLOSIS

BY: Melissa Jeremiah, RN, CHCE

Director of Hoosier Uplands Home Health and Hospice

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, “40,000 cases of Salmonellosis, or Salmonella infections are reported in the United States.” “Because milder cases go unreported the actual number may be 30 or more times greater.” Salmonellosis is more common in the summer than in the winter. People at increased risk of a severe Salmonellosis are young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems. Approximately 400 persons die each year from Salmonellosis.

Symptoms of Salmonellosis:

Diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps that develop 12 – 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 – 7 days, and most people recover without treatment. Some people have severe diarrhea and require hospitalization. In patients with severe Salmonellosis, Salmonella may spread from the intestines to the blood stream, and cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics. A small number of persons with Salmonellosis develop pain in their joints, irritation of the eyes and pain with urination, which is called Reiter’s syndrome. Reiter’s syndrome can last for months or years, and lead to chronic arthritis. Antibiotic treatment does not make a difference in whether a person develops arthritis.

Preventing Salmonellosis:

- #1-Wash your hands often when preparing a meal, for 20 seconds at a time. Remember to wash hands between tasks, such as handling raw meats then cutting fresh vegetables. Also, wash kitchen work surfaces and utensils with soap and water immediately after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry.**
- #2-Avoid eating foods, when baking, that contain raw eggs or unpasteurized milk, such as cookie dough and cake batter.**
- #3-Use a meat thermometer, as it is the only fool-proof way to tell if meat is at the proper temp:
140 degrees fahrenheit: fully cooked ham to reheat.
160 degrees: hamburger, steaks, roasts, pork, fresh ham and egg dishes/casseroles.
165 degrees: ground chicken, ground turkey, stuffing and reheated leftovers.
170 degrees: boneless turkey roasts and white meat poultry.
180 degrees: duck, goose, whole chicken, whole turkey and dark meat poultry.**
- #4-If served undercooked meat, poultry or eggs in a restaurant, send it back to be cooked longer.**
- #5-Wash hands with soap after handling reptiles, birds or baby chicks, and after contact with pet feces.**
- #6-Persons with Salmonellosis should not prepare food until their diarrhea has resolved.**
- #7-Reptiles are not appropriate pets for small children or persons with weakened immune systems.**
- #8-Don’t work with raw poultry or meat, and an infant at the same time.**
- #9-Mothers milk is the safest food for young infants. Breastfeeding prevents Salmonellitis and many other health problems.**

This article was researched at www.cdc.gov and www.homefoodsafety.org.