

# ALLEGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## Office Administration

(269) 673-5411

## Bioterrorism Preparedness

673-5411

## Personal Health

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## Communicable Disease

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## Environmental Health

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## Resource Recovery

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## Salmonella

### What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacterial germ that gets into the intestines and causes illness. The bacteria can be found in contaminated raw produce, raw eggs, unpasteurized milk, meat, poultry, as well as pet turtles, lizards, snakes, iguanas, and chicks.

### How is it spread?

Most types of salmonella live in the intestinal tracts of animals and birds and are transmitted to humans by contaminated foods. Salmonella bacteria are also shed in the feces of infected individuals. Unless there is proper hand washing after bowel movements, the bacteria can be spread from contaminated hands to food during preparation. Salmonella may also be found in the feces of some pets, and people can become infected if they do not wash their hands after contact.

### What are the early signs and what is the incubation period?

Symptoms usually appear 6-72 hours after contact with the virus. Symptoms of Salmonella vary, but may include any combination of the following symptoms: loose or watery diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, headache and occasionally vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually low grade.

### How long is the person contagious?

Salmonella is contagious from the active stage of the illness until the bacteria are no longer present in the stool, usually several days.

### How is salmonella treated?

Salmonella infections usually resolve in 4-7 days and often do not require treatment. Medication is only given in certain situations. To make sure the infection is gone, you may have to submit another stool sample.

### When is it OK to return to school/day care/work?

If you are a food handler, or work at or attend a day care, you may be excluded until symptoms are gone and stool cultures are negative.

### Other Important Information/Prevention Information

- Do not eat raw eggs or drink unpasteurized milk or juice.
- Throw away cracked eggs because they may have the germ in them.
- Cook meat and poultry to a safe temperature before eating it (see [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov))
- Put cooked meat into a refrigerator right after a meal.
- Scrub cutting boards, counters, and utensils with hot, soapy water after contact with raw or cooked meat, poultry, or eggs.
- Wash your hands and your children's hands after using the bathroom, after changing diapers, before eating, before and after preparing food, between handling food items, and after playing with animals
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before serving
- More information can be found at [www.cdc.gov/salmonella](http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella)

This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact an Allegan County Public Health Nurse at 269-673-5411.