



# Guidance for Mitigation of Salmonella in Community Congregate Settings

## **Background**

Salmonella infection (Salmonellosis) is a common bacterial disease that affect the intestinal tract. Salmonella bacteria live in the intestines of people and animals. People can get salmonella infection from a variety of sources like eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water and by touching infected animals, their stool, or their environment. Salmonella illness is more common in the summer. There are several prevention measures that can be put in place to prevent the spread salmonella in community congregate settings such as proper food preparation and following standard precautions.

## **Symptoms Associated with Salmonella:**

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Stomach cramps

Some people may have nausea, vomiting, or headache.

## **How long does it take from exposure to onset of symptoms?**

Symptoms usually begin 6 hours to 6 days after infection and last 4 to 7 days. However, some people do not develop symptoms for several weeks after infection and others experience symptoms for several weeks. If Salmonella is present in the stool, a person may pass the germs on to other people. Salmonella can be present in stool for several weeks after symptoms have resolved.

## **Risk Factors Associated with Contracting Salmonella:**

Though all people can get salmonella, some people are at higher risk for infection, such as:

- Children younger than 5 years
- Adults 65 years and older
- People with weakened immune systems

People with weakened immune systems can experience more severe illnesses like diarrhea and a fever higher than 102°F; diarrhea for more than 3 days that is not improving; bloody stools; prolonged vomiting that prevents you from keeping liquids down and dehydration. If these symptoms occur, it is important to contact your facility's medical provider to assess the resident.

## **Immediate Next Steps for Case Treatment and Monitoring:**

Upon the identification of a resident or staff with symptoms consistent with salmonella:

1. Food handlers and dietary Staff members should not be allowed to work until 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped.

2. If a resident is displaying symptoms, they should have their own bathroom. If having a separate bathroom for infected residents is not possible, ensure proper cleaning and disinfection is occurring after each use by the case.
3. If possible, keep track of close contacts to the residents that have tested positive by asking if the close contact has also experienced similar symptoms.
4. Learn more on the difference between cleaning and disinfecting here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants>.
5. Following a diagnosis, residents should be placed under [standard precautions](#) (all staff should wear gloves when handling or cleaning any bodily fluids),
6. Contact the Special Populations team at the Chicago Department of Public Health to report any cases of salmonella here: <https://redcap.link/specpopreport>

## **Preventing Salmonella:**

### **You can get a Salmonella infection from a variety of foods**

Salmonella can be found in many foods, including sprouts and other vegetables, eggs, chicken, pork, fruits, and even processed foods, such as nut butters, frozen pot pies, chicken nuggets, and stuffed chicken entrees. Contaminated foods usually look and smell normal, which is why it is important to follow the food safety steps (Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill).

### **Salmonella also can spread from animals to people and from people to people**

Always wash your hands after contact with animals. Also wash your hands after using the toilet, changing diapers, or helping someone with diarrhea clean up after using the toilet.

### **Salmonella infection is more common in the summer.**

Warmer weather and unrefrigerated foods create ideal conditions for *Salmonella* to grow. Be sure to refrigerate or freeze perishables (foods likely to spoil or go bad quickly), prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours (or 1 hour if the temperature outside is 90°F or hotter)

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