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What is Salmonellosis ?

Salmonellosis is an infection of the intestines caused by bacteria called *Salmonella*. Symptoms usually develop 12-72 hours after the bacteria are swallowed.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually develop 6 - 72 hours after bacteria are swallowed. Symptoms may disappear untreated in 2 to 5 days. Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Headache
- Fever
- Vomiting (sometimes)
- Dehydration, especially among infants and the elderly

How is it spread?

- Salmonella bacteria leaves the body in the stool. If infected people fail to wash their hands well after going to the bathroom, they can pass the bacteria to others from their hands.
- Salmonella can also be spread by contaminated food, water, or milk.
- Salmonella also spreads through contact with infected animals, especially poultry, swine, cattle, rodents, and pets such as reptiles, chicks, ducklings, terrapins, dogs and cats.
- Outbreaks of salmonella are usually traced to foods such as commercially processed meat products, inadequately cooked poultry and poultry products, uncooked or lightly cooked foods containing eggs and egg products, unpasteurized milk and dairy products, and foods contaminated with feces of an infected foodhandler.
- Salmonella contamination has been identified in food that was processed or prepared with contaminated cooking utensils or on contaminated cutting boards or counter tops.

Diagnosis and treatment

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

Prevention

- Wash hands well after going to the bathroom and before eating or preparing food.
- Cook all meats, particularly poultry, pork, egg products and meat dishes thoroughly.
- Disinfect food preparation surfaces and utensils after each use (1 tsp. liquid household bleach per gallon of water). Do not rinse. Let air dry. Prepare the bleach solution fresh daily.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked eggs.
- Drink only pasteurized milk.
- Dispose diapers properly and wash your hands after changing a diaper.
- Refrigerate food promptly.

NOTE: People who have diarrhea should avoid working as foodhandlers, or caring for children or patients. Children who have diarrhea should not go to child care.

For additional information, please contact the Yakima Health District at (509) 249-6541.