

For your protection and the benefit of other pets in the household, we request that the owner(s) or an authorized agent of the owner read the following information. If you have any questions, please ask the attending veterinarian.

What is *Salmonella*?

1. What is *Salmonella*?

Salmonella is a bacteria that can infect humans and domestic pets, including dogs and cats and other animals. Animals infected with *Salmonella* may temporarily shed the bacteria in their feces or may become permanent carriers that shed intermittently. This increases the risk that other animals or people may be infected.

Salmonella Infection in Humans

2. What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is a disease condition caused by infection with *Salmonella* bacteria. Most patients with salmonellosis develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 6 to 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most persons recover without treatment. However, the diarrhea may be so severe in some patients that hospitalization is required. In these patients, the *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to other body sites, possibly leading to death. The elderly, children under the age of five, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.

3. How common is salmonellosis?

Every year, approximately 40,000 cases of salmonellosis are reported in the United States. Because many milder cases are not diagnosed or reported, the actual number of infections may be much greater. The rate of diagnosed infections in children less than five years of age is higher than the rates in all other persons. It is estimated that approximately 400 persons die each year from salmonellosis.

4. Are there long-term consequences to a *Salmonella* infection?

Persons with diarrhea usually recover completely, although it may be several months before their bowel habits are entirely normal. A small number of persons with *Salmonella* develop pain in their joints, irritation of the eyes, and painful urination.

Salmonella infection in Pets

5. How is *Salmonella* spread in pets?

The principal way pets become infected with *Salmonella* is by eating materials or feed contaminated by feces containing the bacteria. Thus, it is important to prevent other animals from contacting the feces of a dog or cat shedding *Salmonella* in its feces. *Salmonella* can be spread from animal to animal and between animals and humans by direct contact, fecal contamination of the environment, and by people who carry *Salmonella* on their footwear, clothes, hands, or other objects.

6. How can I prevent spreading *Salmonella* in pets?

To minimize the risk of spread between pets or from pets to humans, limit contact between the patient and other pets or household members until the infection is resolved. Feed and water containers, grooming utensils, etc. of an infected pet should not be shared with other pets. Persons handling an infected pet should always wash their hands thoroughly after handling. One should not eat or drink while handling the pet's feces or the animal (e.g. grooming).

7. How long should the pet be isolated?

The answer to this question is not completely known. *Salmonella* can be shed in the feces of pets for 4-6 weeks after infection. The best available method for determining how long the pet is to be isolated is to submit feces for *Salmonella* culture. We recommend discussing the different options available with your veterinarian.

Please consult your family physician if you have concerns about your individual risks or risks of those in your household.

For more information please refer to:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/>
2. Equine *Salmonella* Information Sheet for Clients. Large Animal Hospital, Texas Veterinary Medical Center, Texas A&M.
3. Kate S. KuKanich. Update on *Salmonella* spp contamination of pet food, treats, and nutritional products and safe feeding recommendations. JAVMA, Vol 238, No. 11, June 1, 2011