
What is salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacterium which causes food poisoning. Most people recover without treatment but, if you become seriously ill, you may need hospital care because of the dehydration (fluid loss) caused by the illness.

What are the symptoms of salmonella and how long do they last?

Symptoms include diarrhoea, stomach cramps and sometimes vomiting and/or fever. On average, it takes from 12 to 72 hours for the symptoms to develop after swallowing an infectious dose of salmonella. Symptoms usually last for four to seven days and clear up without treatment. You may require treatment if you become dehydrated.

Who gets salmonella?

Anyone can get salmonella, but young children, the elderly and people who have immune systems that are not working properly (including people with cancer and HIV) have a greater risk of becoming severely ill.

How do you get infected with salmonella?

You usually get salmonella by eating contaminated food. Salmonella bacteria live in the gut of many farm animals and can affect meat, eggs, poultry and milk. Other foods like green vegetables, fruit and shellfish can become contaminated through contact with manure in the soil or sewage in the water.

Contamination is also possible if raw and cooked foods are stored together.

Most pet reptiles or amphibians can carry salmonella. Dogs, cats and rodents can occasionally become infected.

How can you avoid getting infected with salmonella?

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water:

- before preparing and eating food
 - after handling raw food
 - after going to the toilet or changing a baby's nappy
 - after contact with pets and other animals, especially reptiles and amphibians
 - after working in the garden.
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- Keep cooked food away from raw food.
 - Store raw foods below cooked or ready-to-eat foods in the fridge to prevent their contamination.
 - Wash raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.
 - Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, so that it is piping hot.
 - Keep all kitchen surfaces and equipment including knives, chopping boards and dish cloths clean.

- Do not drink untreated water from lakes, rivers or streams.
- Do not keep reptiles or amphibians in households where there is a child under 5 years of age, or someone with a weakened immune system.
- If someone has salmonella, wash all dirty clothes, bedding and towels in the washing machine on the hottest cycle possible. Clean toilet seats, toilet bowls, flush handles, taps and wash hand basins after use with detergent and hot water, followed by a household disinfectant.

How do you treat salmonella?

It is important to drink plenty of fluids as diarrhoea or vomiting can lead to dehydration and you can lose important sugars and minerals from your body.

Your doctor may recommend a re-hydration solution, available from your pharmacist.

If you feel sick, try taking small sips of fluid, frequently. Avoid tea, coffee, carbonated drinks or alcohol.

Always dilute sugary drinks even if you would not normally dilute them.

A simple painkiller like paracetamol can help combat any pain.

Sometimes severe cases are treated with antibiotics. If you are given antibiotics it is essential that you complete the course as prescribed.

Do you need to stay off work or school?

Yes. While you are ill and have symptoms you are infectious. Children and adults should stay away from nursery, school or work for 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.

You should tell your employer you have had salmonella if you work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, those in poor health, or if you handle food.

Will I have to stay in hospital until Salmonella has cleared?

Patients do not usually have to stay in hospital until salmonella infection has cleared. If you are able to care for yourself and maintain your fluid intake you should be able to go home.

How will this affect my visitors?

- Visitors are allowed as normal.
- Visitors will be requested to decontaminate their hands on entering and leaving the ward. If helping with personal care they must wear gloves and aprons; which must be disposed of in the orange clinical waste bin. Hands must be decontaminated following any period of "hands on" care.
- Please do not allow visitors to sit or lie on your bed.

What happens when I go home?

Once your salmonella infection has cleared and you are no longer symptomatic for 48 hours, you may return to work/usual activities as normal and should experience no further problems.

Further Information

Please speak to an Infection Prevention & Control Nurse.

The Infection Prevention Team

Telephone: 01493 453136

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

- Courtesy and respect
- A welcoming and positive attitude
 - Polite, friendly and interested in people
 - Value and respect people as individuals
- So people feel **welcome**
- Attentively kind and helpful
- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
 - Attentive, responsive & take time to help
 - Visible presence of staff to provide care
- So people feel **cared for**

- Responsive communication
- Listen to people & answer their questions
 - Keep people clearly informed
 - Involve people
- So people feel **in control**
- Effective and professional
- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
 - Effective care / services from joined up teams
 - Organised and timely, looking to improve
- So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240