



Will I need treatment?

Generally speaking, people infected with Salmonella do not require medical treatment. Salmonella can cause the body to lose a large amount of water through diarrhoea and vomiting, so you should drink plenty of fluids to replace the lost water and prevent dehydration. If symptoms become severe, you should contact your GP for further advice.

When can I return to work? When can children return to school or childcare?

In order to reduce the risk of spreading infection, you should not return to work, and children should not return to school or childcare until symptom free for 48 hours.

*If you are worried that you have contracted Salmonella you should contact your General Practitioner (GP), who may ask you to provide a stool sample to confirm the diagnosis.
If you would simply like more information contact either your GP or the Public Health Protection Unit at Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS Board.
Tel: 0141-201-4917*

**For further information
please log onto our website:**

<http://www.nhsggc.org.uk>

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West House
Gartnavel Royal Hospital
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Salmonella

Patient information leaflet

Public Health Protection Unit 0141 201 4917

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What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacterium (germ) which can cause food poisoning and less commonly, infection in the bloodstream and other organs.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms associated with Salmonella usually start 6-72 hours after ingesting the bacteria. These include:

Stomach pain

Headache

Diarrhoea

Nausea/vomiting

Fever

Joint pains (occasionally)

Most individuals experience symptoms for up to 7 days. Healthy individuals tend to have less severe symptoms or may not even feel ill. Infants, the elderly, and those with impaired immune systems may develop a more severe illness as the infection can spread from the bowel to other body sites via the blood stream. A small number of people, especially young children, may carry salmonella in their bowel after their symptoms have ceased. They eventually get rid of the bacteria without any long-term ill effects.

How does it spread?

Food is the most common source of Salmonella for humans. Salmonella can be caught by eating undercooked, contaminated meat, especially poultry, unpasteurised dairy products as well as raw or undercooked eggs or certain foods prepared with raw eggs. An increase in cases is often seen in late summer possibly due to the warmer weather leading to a more rapid growth of bacteria and greater consumption of undercooked food, e.g. barbecues, and also due to infections in travellers returning from abroad.

Salmonella may be spread by cross contamination (this is due to raw meat coming into contact with food that does not require further cooking or by contamination of ready to eat food by an infected person).

Pets can also be a source of salmonella infection. Most reptiles carry salmonella in their gut without showing any signs of being ill, and can contaminate their surroundings and pass the infection to humans. Dogs, cats and rodents can sometimes become infected.

A person infected with Salmonella can pass a large number of the bacteria in the faeces. It can be transmitted from person to person, most commonly between children, if their personal hygiene is inadequate.

Can I prevent infection?

Adhering to the following advice can reduce the risk of contracting or spreading salmonella:

1. Always wash your hands.

Regular, thorough hand washing with soap and warm water is essential and should be done:

Before:

- *Food handling & cooking*
- *Eating*
- *Feeding young children or the elderly*

and After:

- *Handling raw eggs or meat*
- *Using the toilet*
- *Handling pets, especially reptiles*
- *Changing nappies*

Keep nails short and clean.

2. Always ensure that food is thoroughly cooked. Adequate cooking destroys Salmonella.

3. Practice safe food preparation.

- Never rinse raw meat before cooking – bacteria can spray onto nearby surfaces such as taps and clean dishes, which may then cause illness.
- Check 'use by' dates - use only food within the recommended period.
- Do not use the same chopping board, knives and utensils for raw meat/fish and other foodstuffs.

- Clean food preparation surfaces with detergent and hot water.
- Prepare and store raw and cooked foods separately.
- Store raw meat and poultry on the shelf below cooked foods to avoid drip contamination.
- Defrost poultry, meat and other products thoroughly before cooking. These items should be cooked until the juices run clear and there are no pink bits inside.
- Always follow manufacturers instructions.
- Once cooked, consume food immediately or cool rapidly and refrigerate or freeze.
- Keep perishable products in the refrigerator operating below 5°C. Salmonella can multiply on food at room temperature.
- If you re-heat food, make sure it is piping hot throughout.
- Wash salad items and other food to be eaten raw.
- Exclude pests and pets from the kitchen as they can also carry salmonella.

4. Avoid eating raw eggs and unpasteurised dairy products.

Unpasteurised dairy products and raw or undercooked eggs are best avoided (though British chicken eggs carrying the Lion mark are considered very low risk). Be especially careful when ordering restaurant dishes that may be made with raw or undercooked eggs (e.g. Hollandaise sauce, Caesar salad dressing). It is often helpful to find out whether the restaurant uses pasteurised eggs when making these dishes, which is what their Environmental Health Departments advise them to do.

5. Avoid keeping reptiles or amphibians in households where there is a child under 5 years of age, or someone with a weakened immune system (e.g. people who have had an organ transplant or who are undergoing chemotherapy, or are on high dose steroids).

6. Avoid swimming pools until 2 weeks after the last episode of diarrhoea.