



Information about *Salmonella* Infection

Why Have You Been Given This Leaflet?

Your local council has a responsibility to investigate food poisoning and certain incidents of infectious disease. An officer from your local council's Environmental Health Department is contacting you to try and find out where your infection may have come from and to give advice on preventing further spread to others.

NHS Tayside Health Protection Team has notified your local Environmental Health Department that you or one of your household is suffering from a *Salmonella* infection. They are often the first to tell you what type of infection you have rather than your General Practitioner (GP).

The aim of this leaflet is to give you information and to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about *Salmonella* infection. **Please take time to read this leaflet.**

What is a *Salmonella* infection?

Salmonella infection is caused by a group of bacteria (germs) which have been responsible for outbreaks of food poisoning in the UK.

Where does it come from?

The bacteria are found commonly in food producing animals such as poultry, pigs and cows. *Salmonella* can also cause infection in pets e.g. reptiles, new born animals.

How can you get *Salmonella* infection?

You can become infected by

- Eating undercooked meat, eggs and poultry
- Eating cooked or ready to eat food that has been contaminated by raw meat, particularly poultry
- Eating unwashed raw vegetables (including salad) which may have been contaminated
- Drinking unpasteurised milk and untreated water supplies
- Touching animals and not washing hands afterwards
- Contact with an infected person
- Spread from person to person by poor personal hygiene.

What are the usual symptoms?

The main symptoms are

- Severe stomach cramps
- Diarrhoea
- Sometimes fever and vomiting

When do the symptoms start?

The symptoms usually start 12 to 36 hours after swallowing the bacteria but it can be as early as 6 hours and as long as 4 days.

How long will the symptoms last?

Symptoms usually last for 4 to 7 days but can last as long as 3 weeks.

How do you treat a *Salmonella* infection?

The infection will usually settle without any treatment. Sometimes severe cases are treated with antibiotics. If you are given antibiotics it is essential that you complete the course as prescribed.

It is important to drink fluids to replace the water lost through having diarrhoea and vomiting. This applies particularly for babies, children and the elderly.

If a young child has symptoms or if your symptoms continue or are particularly severe, consult your GP or seek medical advice from NHS 24.

Do I need to stay off nursery, school, work or other activities?

Yes, it is important to stay at home until you have had no vomiting or diarrhoea for 2 days.

If you are an adult you should stay away from work and avoid visiting others. If you are a child it is important to stay away from school, nursery, playgroup or mother and toddler group and avoid visiting others.

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

If any of your household are young children, work as a food handler, or provide care for or work with vulnerable groups they should stay off school or work until NHS Tayside Health Protection Team are sure they have not acquired the infection.

NHS Tayside Health Protection Team will contact and advise those who may be required to stay off nursery, school, work or other activities.

What should I do if I have symptoms again?

If your symptoms return or become more severe (e.g. blood in diarrhoea) you should see a GP or seek medical advice from NHS 24.

What should I do if I know of others with similar symptoms?

If a young child develops symptoms or if an adult has symptoms which are severe or last for more than 2 days they should consult their GP or seek medical advice from NHS 24.

They should, if possible, submit a stool sample via their GP.

You should tell the officer of the Environmental Health Department the details of the others you know to be ill. This information can help in identifying sources of infection.

How can you avoid getting or passing to others a *Salmonella* infection?

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water

- Before preparing, handling or eating foods
- After handling raw food especially meat or poultry
- As soon as possible after working, feeding, grooming or playing with pets and other animals
- You should pay special attention to hygiene during farm visits, washing hands after any contact with animals, and eating only in designated areas
- After going to the toilet or changing a child's nappy
- By ensuring young children wash their hands.

Handle food and drink safely

- Thoroughly cook eggs, meat and poultry so that they are cooked all the way through, and no blood runs from them
- Thaw frozen food properly before cooking
- Always reheat food thoroughly
- Do not use the same knives, chopping boards and equipment for preparing raw foods and cooked or ready to eat foods
- Thoroughly clean knives, chopping boards and equipment used for preparing raw foods with hot water and detergent after each use
- Never put cooked food back on an unwashed plate previously used for uncooked meat
- Do not wash raw poultry because this will splash germs around
- Store cooked or ready to eat food in the fridge separately from raw meats. Raw foods should not be stored above or beside cooked or ready to eat food
- Store uncooked meat on the bottom of the fridge to avoid dripping raw meat juices onto other food
- Wash all fruit, salads and vegetables that are to be eaten raw
- Do not drink untreated water or unpasteurised milk
- Do not use ice or drinking water in countries where the water supply might be unsafe
- Do not buy ready to eat foods from shops where you believe food hygiene standards are poor. Report such places to your local Environmental Health Department
- **Do not** prepare food for others until your diarrhoea and vomiting symptoms have been stopped for 48 hours.

Household Measures

Whilst you have symptoms you need to be scrupulously clean around your home.

- Make sure all members of your household wash their hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after going to the toilet and after handling soiled clothing or bedding
- Make sure that everyone has their own towel and that they do not use anybody else's
- Wash all soiled clothes, bedding and towels in the washing machine on the hottest cycle that the manufacturer would recommend
- Clean toilet seats, toilet bowls, flush handles, taps and wash hand basins after use with detergent and hot water, followed by a household disinfectant.

Water Safety

- Do not use swimming pools (including hot tubs and paddling pools, etc.) if you have diarrhoea. You should wait until you have had no symptoms for 2 days
- Do not swim in water that may be contaminated
- Do not drink untreated water and avoid swallowing water when in lakes and swimming pools
- If your water supply is from a private water source please discuss this with the Environmental Health Department.

Animal care

- Exclude reptiles or amphibians from households where there are young children.
- Follow the above hand washing advice but particularly with reptiles

Where can you get further advice?

If you would like any further advice about *Salmonella* infection or food hygiene please contact your local Environmental Health Department. The local offices are listed below

Angus Council

Economic Development and Environmental & Consumer
Protection Department
Dewar House
12 Hill Terrace
Arbroath
DD11 1AH
Website: www.angus.gov.uk
Email: envhealth@angus.gov.uk



Tele: 01241 435600

Dundee City Council

Environmental Health and Trading Standards Department
1 Highland Chief Way
Claverhouse West Industrial Park
Dundee
DD4 9UA
Website: www.dundee.gov.uk
Email: food.safety@dundee.gov.uk



Tele: 01382 436260

Perth & Kinross Council

The Environment Service
Pullar House
35 Kinnoull Street
Perth
PH1 5GD
Website: www.pkc.gov.uk
Email: es@pkc.gov.uk



Tele: 01738 476476

Other useful sources of information

The National Hand Washing Campaign

www.washyourhandsofthem.com

The Food Standards Agency

www.food.gov.uk

Travel and Immunisation Advice

www.fitfortravel.com

NHS 24

Tele: 08454 24 24 24 www.nhs24.com

NHS Tayside

Health Protection Team
Directorate of Public Health
Kings Cross
Clepington Road
Dundee
DD3 8EA
Website: www.taysidepublichealth.com



Tele: 01382 596976 or 596987

Further copies of this information are available or can be downloaded from the above NHS and local council. This information can be made available in Urdu, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, large print, Braille or audio tape. Information in other languages and formats can be made available on request. Contact NHS Tayside Communications Department on 01382 424138.