

Do I need to stay off work or school?

Yes. While you are ill and have symptoms you are infectious. You can return to work or school once you have been free from diarrhoea for 48 hours.

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

How should hands be washed?

- Always use warm, running water and a mild, preferably liquid, soap. (It is not essential to use soaps labelled as antiseptic or antibacterial).
- Wet hands and apply a small amount of soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 20 seconds. Pay special attention to areas between fingers, finger tips and palms.
- Rinse hands under warm running water and dry thoroughly on a clean dry towel.

Environmental Health

You may also be contacted by an Environmental Health Officer. This is to see if there is a link between your illness and any other infections in the area. If you need to be visited, the officer will contact you in person.

Useful Information

Food Standards Agency www.foodstandards.gov.uk

NHS 24

Freephone 111
www.nhs24.scot

Further information and help

For further information please contact your GP.

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 or 07814 071868 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Health Protection Team

Salmonella



Patient information leaflet

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a food poisoning bacteria. It is the second most common bacterial cause of gastrointestinal illness in the UK.

How did I get infected with Salmonella?

In most cases of Salmonella, food is the most common cause of infection; from eating raw or undercooked food, particularly meat, poultry, eggs and contaminated milk.

Infection can also be spread person to person through contact with someone who is infected.

Salmonella is also found in the gut of many wild and domestic animals, including birds (especially poultry), pigs, cattle, and pets such as cats, dogs, snakes, lizards, and other reptiles and amphibians.

It is impossible to tell from its appearance whether food is contaminated with Salmonella. It will look, smell and taste normal, so correct handling and cooking are very important.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of Salmonella can include:

- diarrhoea
- nausea and vomiting
- stomach pains and cramps
- high temperature
- headache
- malaise (tiredness).

For some people infected with Salmonella the illness can begin with flu-like symptoms. However, others will have sudden diarrhoea, stomach cramps, headaches, fever, nausea and vomiting.

The incubation period (the time taken from swallowing the bacteria until illness starts) ranges from 6 hours to 3 days, but is usually between 12 and 36 hours.

The infection often clears without treatment within 7 days, although some people can remain infectious for longer.

How is Salmonella treated?

Generally people with Salmonella do not require treatment other than making sure that they drink enough fluid to prevent dehydration. Most people with Salmonella will recover within 2-5 days, although it can sometimes take up to 10 days to get better.

You should contact your GP if you have underlying health conditions or a weakened immune system, if you are pregnant, or if any of the following applies to you:

- blood in your diarrhoea
- severe abdominal pain
- diarrhoea lasting for 48 hours.

Your GP may wish to do some blood tests to make sure no complications are developing.

Sometimes, if the infection is very severe your GP may decide to prescribe antibiotics. If you are prescribed antibiotics, it is important that you complete the course as instructed on the bottle or packet.

How can I avoid a Salmonella infection?

- Wash 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
 - after working in the garden.
- Cook food thoroughly paying particular attention to defrosting frozen foods before cooking.
- Use separate chopping boards for cooked meats, uncooked meats, and raw vegetables.
- Cover and store raw meat separately from other produce in the fridge, preferably on the bottom shelf to prevent juices dripping on cooked or ready to eat foods.
- Avoid eating or drinking raw or undercooked food such as eggs, unpasteurised milk, or cheese made from unpasteurised milk.
- Store eggs in the fridge and do not use cracked or dirty ones.
- When travelling abroad select foods that are cooked and served hot. Avoid raw fruit and vegetables that have not been cooked or peeled, such as salads.
- Wash hands thoroughly after contact with all animals and their faeces, after using the toilet, or changing nappies.

If someone in your household has Salmonella put all dirty clothes, bedding and towels on the hottest cycle of the washing machine 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.