



Food Safety

Salmonella and Food

What You Need to Know

- *Salmonella* are bacteria that can make you sick.
- *Salmonella* can be found in a variety of foods, including chicken, beef, pork, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and even processed foods.
- Some people are more likely to get an infection and serious illness.
- You can take steps to prevent infection, such as following the [clean, separate, cook, and chill guidelines](#).



Watch [AJ's story](#) to find out what happened when he got sick with antibiotic-resistant *Salmonella* from eating chicken.

Food that is contaminated with *Salmonella* or other harmful germs usually looks, tastes, and smells normal. That's why it's important to know how to prevent infection.

Salmonella cause far more illnesses than you might suspect. For every case of *Salmonella* illness confirmed by laboratory tests, almost 30 other cases are not reported. That's because most people with [symptoms](#) of foodborne illness do not go to the doctor or submit a sample to a laboratory, so we never learn what germ made them sick. CDC estimates that *Salmonella* cause more than 1 million foodborne illnesses in the United States every year.

What can cause *Salmonella* infection?

You can get a *Salmonella* infection from [a variety of foods](#), including chicken, turkey, beef, pork, eggs, fruits, sprouts, other vegetables, and even processed foods, such as nut butters, frozen pot pies, chicken nuggets, and stuffed chicken entrees. Some recent *Salmonella* outbreaks that sickened people in many states were linked to chicken, ground turkey, ground beef, raw tuna, mushrooms, onions, peaches, papayas, cut fruits, cashew brie, and tahini.

Food isn't the only way *Salmonella* spread to people. The bacteria also spread through contaminated water, the environment, other people, and animals. Even pets and animals you might come into contact with at [petting zoos, farms, fairs, and schools and daycares](#) can carry *Salmonella* and other harmful germs. [Get tips](#) to help you stay safe around feathery, furry, and scaly friends.

Who is more likely to get a *Salmonella* infection?

Certain people are more likely to get a serious *Salmonella* infection. These people include children who are younger than 5, adults who are 65 and older, and people whose immune systems are weakened from certain medical conditions (such as diabetes, liver or kidney disease, and cancer) or their treatments.

Salmonella Symptoms

Salmonella illness can be serious. [Symptoms](#) usually start 6 hours to 6 days after infection. They include diarrhea that can be bloody, fever, and stomach cramps. Most people recover within 4 to 7 days without antibiotic treatment. But some people with severe diarrhea may need to be hospitalized or take antibiotics.

Call the doctor if you have:

- Diarrhea and a fever higher than 102°F
- Diarrhea for more than 3 days that is not improving
- Bloody stools
- Prolonged vomiting that prevents you from keeping liquids down
- Signs of dehydration, such as:
 - Making very little urine
 - Dry mouth and throat
 - Dizziness when standing up

Spotlight on Chicken



CDC estimates that *Salmonella* causes more foodborne illnesses than any other bacteria.

Chicken is a major source of these illnesses. In fact, about [1 in every 25 packages of chicken](#) at the grocery store are contaminated with *Salmonella*.

You can get sick from contaminated chicken if it's not cooked thoroughly. You can also get sick if its juices leak in the refrigerator or get on kitchen surfaces and then get on something you eat raw, such as salad.

It is possible to reduce *Salmonella* contamination of chicken and the resulting illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths. CDC is working with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, state health officials, consumer groups, and industry to help prevent illnesses from chicken by better controlling germs at each step of the food production chain, from the farm to the fork.

[Learn about measures](#) that have been shown to reduce *Salmonella* contamination of chicken.

Four Steps to Help Prevent *Salmonella* Infection From Food

Follow the Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill guidelines to help keep you and your family safe from *Salmonella* infection and other kinds of food poisoning.

Clean

- Wash hands with soap and clean, running water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, especially after touching raw or undercooked eggs, meats, poultry (like chicken and turkey), seafood, or their juices.

- Wash utensils, cutting boards, dishes, and countertops with hot, soapy water, especially after they've touched raw or undercooked eggs, meats, poultry, seafood, or their juices.
- Don't wash raw eggs, meats, poultry, or seafood before cooking. Washing can spread germs to other foods, utensils, and surfaces.
- Sanitize kitchen surfaces with a freshly made solution of one tablespoon of unscented liquid chlorine bleach in one gallon of water.

Separate

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from other foods in your grocery cart and in your refrigerator. Keep eggs in the original carton and store them in the main part of the refrigerator, not in the door.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood separate from ready-to-eat foods, such as salads and deli meat.
- Use separate cutting boards and plates for produce and for raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw or undercooked eggs, meats, poultry, seafood, or their juices.

Cook

- Use a food thermometer to ensure that foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature:
 - 145°F for beef, pork, ham, veal, and lamb (let the meat rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating)
 - 145°F for fish with fins (or cook until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork)
 - 160°F for ground beef, ground pork, ground veal, and ground lamb
 - 160°F for egg dishes
 - 165°F for poultry (chicken, turkey, duck), including ground chicken and ground turkey
 - 165°F for casseroles
 - Microwave food to 165°F or above
- Cook eggs properly. Do not eat raw eggs or eggs that have runny whites or yolks.

Chill

- Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or colder.
- Never leave perishable foods (including meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, eggs, dairy, cut fruit, cooked rice, and leftovers) out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours. If the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F (like a hot car or picnic), refrigerate or freeze it within 1 hour.

More Information

- CDC's [Salmonella website](#)
- Easy-to-read charts:
 - [Safe Minimum Cooking Temperatures](#) 
 - [Meat and Poultry Roasting](#) 
 - [Cold Food Storage](#) 
 - [Food Safety During Power Outage](#) 
- [How Food Gets Contaminated](#)

Food Safety Features



Read other food safety features to learn more about protecting yourself and your loved ones from food poisoning.

Features