

# Stay Healthy When Working with Farm Animals:

Follow these simple tips to help prevent illness when working with farm animals

Working with farm animals can be a rewarding and meaningful experience for children. Caring for and showing these animals are great ways for children to learn about agricultural sciences and personal responsibility. However many farm animals, including cattle, goats, sheep, swine, and poultry, can carry germs such as *Salmonella* or *E. coli* that can make people sick. Luckily, there are simple steps that you can take to help prevent illness.

## How do people get sick from farm animals?

Animals can carry germs even when they appear healthy and clean. The germs are shed in animals' feces (poop) and can easily contaminate their bodies (fur or feathers) and anything in areas where these animals live and roam. People can become ill by touching farm animals or the areas where the animals live and roam.

## Who is at most risk?

Anyone can get sick from farm animals, but some people are more likely to have a serious illness:

- Children younger than 5 years of age
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women
- People with some illnesses (like cancer) that weaken immune systems



## Follow these simple tips to help prevent illness:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching farm animals or anything in the areas where they live and roam. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them.
  - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Supervise children younger than 5 years of age if they handle or touch farm animals or animal areas and equipment. Young kids should avoid certain animals that are more likely to spread germs, including poultry, pre-weaned calves, young goats and sheep, and any ill animals.
- Keep your food and drinks away from farm animals and out of animal areas.
- Keep animals away from areas where food or drink is prepared, stored, or consumed, including kitchens and outdoor patios.
- Have a set of dedicated shoes or boots, gloves, coveralls, or other work clothes that you use just for working in animal areas. Remove them as soon as possible after leaving animal areas.
- Clean gloves and work clothes regularly.
- Clean and disinfect work shoes, boots, and equipment regularly.

To learn more, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/AnimalExhibits/>



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