The Trouble WITH TINY TURTLES

While many people enjoy keeping pet reptiles, some are riskier than others. Here is what you need to know about tiny turtles, a pet that is illegal to sell in the US.

ANY TURTLE CAN CARRY GERMS

like *Salmonella* that can make people sick.

FACT

Salmonella causes a diarrheal illness that lasts 4 - 7 days for most people, but can be serious and lead to hospitalization, especially for kids and older people.

FACT

People can get ***Salmonella*** infections from many different sources. One way is from touching certain animals, like turtles, their tank water, or the areas where they live and roam.

FACT

You can't see germs like ***Salmonella***. Turtles can look healthy and clean but still carry germs. These germs can contaminate tank water and other areas.

FACT

There is good news! You can prevent ***Salmonella*** infections from turtles if you know the facts.

CONTACT WITH TINY TURTLES

has caused large outbreaks of *Salmonella* Infections.

From 2011-2013, 8 multistate outbreaks were linked to handling tiny turtles:

473 sick people in 41 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico

Ages ranged from younger than 1 year old – 94 years old

While people of any age can get sick, Average age 4 years old

70% were children 10 years of age or younger.

31% were infants younger than 1 year old.

69% of people remembered having contact with a turtle before they got sick.

88% of people said the turtle had a shell length less than 4 inches.

IF YOU BUY A PET TURTLE

buy one from a reputable pet store or breeder.

A playing card is 3 ½ inches long

Although any size turtle can carry ***Salmonella***, tiny turtles are especially risky. Since 1975, the sale of turtles in the US with shell lengths less than 4 inches has been banned by FDA. However, tiny turtles are still sold by street vendors, flea markets, and souvenir shops.

Only buy turtles with shell lengths longer than 4 inches.

Talk to the staff at a reputable pet store to learn more about pet turtles.

DON'T TOSS YOUR TURTLE!

Don't release unwanted turtles. Call your local reputable pet store or a reptile rescue.

HANDLE YOUR PET TURTLE SAFELY

to keep your family healthy while enjoying your pet.

FACT

Always wash your hands after handling your pet turtle or touching areas where they live and roam, especially tank water.

FACT

Don't bathe turtles or clean their tanks in your kitchen or bathroom. Do this outside, or use a tub or bin that is only used for your pet if you must do it inside.

FACT

Don't kiss or snuggle with your turtle. This can increase your risk of getting sick.

Turtles can be great pets, but aren't right for every family. Families that include these groups should consider a different pet:

Kids younger than 5 years

Older adults over the age of 65 years

People with weak immune systems

Find out more at www.cdc.gov/healthypets

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CS255060-B