

# Salmonella



## What is *Salmonella*?

Although *Salmonella*, a bacteria, is most commonly transmitted through contaminated food, many pets can also be a source of *Salmonella* infection. The most common species associated with *Salmonella* are reptiles, amphibians (especially frogs), ducks, chickens and rodents.

## Who in the family is at risk for *Salmonella*?

*Salmonella* is a zoonotic disease (capable of being spread from animals to people). Since all reptiles and amphibians are potential carriers, owners of these pets have a higher risk of exposure. Pregnant women, young children and those with compromised immune systems (cancer patients, AIDS patients, chronically diseased) should avoid contact with reptiles.

## How is *Salmonella* transmitted?

*Salmonella* is spread by direct or indirect contact. Children may contact the infection by putting their hands in their mouths after handling the reptile prior to thorough washing. Bathing a reptile, or cleaning the cage or feeding dishes of your scaly friend in the kitchen sink can be an indirect source of infection to family members as well. Do not touch your face with your hands directly after handling your reptile and do not allow your reptile to touch your face as this can increase the chances of disease transmission.

## How do I know if my pet or I might be infected with *Salmonella*?

People may experience sudden onset of watery or mucousy diarrhea, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain and lethargy. Reptiles do not show symptoms of *Salmonella*, thus all reptiles should be regarded as possible carriers. This does not mean that reptiles cannot be enjoyed and played with. For the right family, reptiles make excellent pets. Good hygiene such as thorough hand washing should be employed after playing with any pet.

## How is *Salmonella* treated?

Since diagnosis can be difficult, treatment in dogs is often symptomatic, including medications to help with diarrhea, vomiting, fever and pain. Specific antibiotics can be used to treat a diagnosed *Salmonella* infection. Seek medical attention from your Banfield doctor if you have any concerns about your pet's health and visit your family practitioner for any health questions about your human family.

## What can you do to protect the entire family from *Salmonella*?

Pets with known infections should be isolated from other pets and family members and treated by your Banfield veterinarian. In people, practice good hygiene for both your family and pet. Encourage family members to wash exposed areas of skin after petting and playing with pets. Food/water dishes, cages and reptiles should be kept out of food preparation areas.

Besides *Salmonella* there are many other zoonotic diseases that pet owners may be exposed to such as fungal, respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases. Due to this, it is imperative that good hygiene and the above safety precautions are implemented by all family members. Your Banfield veterinarian is an expert in zoonotic disease and can assist you in making informed decisions regarding your family and pets.

For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

