

# Salmonella

What you can do to reduce the risk of becoming ill due to Salmonella

## What is Salmonella?

Salmonella infection (salmonellosis) is a common bacterial illness that primarily affects the intestines. Salmonella bacteria typically live in the intestines of infected animals and humans and are shed through faeces. Humans become infected most often through contaminated water or food. People who are most likely to suffer severe symptoms are young children, pregnant women, people with an underlying health condition (e.g. cancer, diabetes, liver and kidney disease) and older people. ?

You can find information on the symptoms of Salmonella and how it makes you ill on the [NHS food poisoning page](#) or on the [UKHSA Salmonella page](#).

## Video: FSA explains Salmonella

## How Salmonella bacteria are spread

Salmonella bacteria live in the guts of many farm animals. During rearing, slaughter and processing, the bacteria can be transferred to food products, such as raw meat, poultry, eggs or unpasteurised milk.

Other foods like green vegetables, fruit and shellfish can become contaminated through contact with manure or contaminated water.

Salmonella bacteria can also be spread from pets such as cats, dogs or reptiles to people. They can also be spread from person to person through poor hygiene (e.g. not properly washing hands after going to the toilet).

There is a risk of spreading the bacteria by cross-contamination in the kitchen by poor food hygiene and handling raw meat (including [raw pet food](#)) or other contaminated food.

## How you can reduce the risk of Salmonella at home

To reduce the risk of Salmonella, it's important to:

- [cook food correctly](#)?by following the instructions on time and temperature – this will kill? salmonella
- [avoid cross-contamination](#)?which might lead to bacteria passing from raw foods to foods that are ready to eat via things like reusable shopping bags, knives, dirty surfaces and chopping boards

- [chill your food](#) below 5°C - this will stop or significantly slow the growth of bacteria including salmonella
- use food and drink by the '[use by](#)' date on the label, even if it looks and smells fine – eating food after this date could put your health at risk as you can't see, smell or taste bacteria which make you ill
- make sure that food preparation areas are [clean](#) to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading
- [wash your hands](#) regularly with soap and water before, during and after meal preparation

It's also important to remember never to drink untreated water from lakes, rivers or streams.