

Advice to reptile owners following withdrawal and recall of frozen mice used as food for pets linked to Salmonella outbreak in people

The FSA, along with Food Standards Scotland, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Animal and Plant Health Agency and the UK Health Security Agency, Public Health Wales and Public Health Scotland are [advising animal keepers not to feed their pets specific batches of frozen mice](#).

Since the outbreak was first reported in 2015, there have been almost 900 cases of illness. [Salmonella](#) (which causes salmonellosis) is a common bacterial disease that affects the intestines and can pass from animals to people or via consumption of contaminated food or exposure to contaminated environments and cause infection.

This outbreak of Salmonella has been linked to specific frozen mice products and as a result, a [product recall](#) information notice detailing affected products has been issued by the FSA. The recall does not affect rats from the same supplier, however investigations are ongoing. Should concerns about the safety of rats be identified, our advice will be updated accordingly. The FSA is instructing reptile owners and others who have a supply of the affected frozen mice to return them to the place of purchase so they can be carefully disposed of.

However, the FSA and partners are also warning people to be extra careful when handling any frozen rodents including mice product and packaging, not just the batches identified, due to the risk of salmonella from other batches linked to this recall.

People should be extra vigilant, washing hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after contact, when handling not just the product, but their reptiles and associated equipment and environment, due to the risk of the illness.

[Further general advice on reducing the risk of contracting Salmonella](#) is available online.

A government spokesperson said:

“In September this year, the FSA introduced new requirements for shops to provide a leaflet warning about the risks of Salmonella and how to keep customers safe when buying and feeding frozen mice to their reptiles. However, the outbreak continues and a full withdrawal and recall of the specific batches of frozen mice is necessary. The withdrawal and recall does not affect rats from the same supplier, however investigations are continuing, should concerns about the safety of rats be identified, advice will be updated.

Therefore, if you have the affected feeder mice product in your freezer, please return it to where you purchased it from so it can be disposed of carefully and thoroughly clean and disinfect any surfaces it has been in contact with, including your hands. We are also asking people to be extra vigilant with all frozen rodent product, however, do check the specific information about which batches are involved as retailers will not be accepting other material.”

Advice to reptile owners about feeding their pets

Snake owners and others using frozen mice as food may have concerns about maintaining their animal's welfare, as the product withdrawal and recall will cause short term shortages. There should be sufficient mice to maintain animal welfare for all snakes and other animals, including birds that need to be fed mice, if owners adapt their current feeding routines. [Detailed advice for reptile owners](#) will be published online.

Advice to parents and guardians of children handling reptiles

Children have been particularly affected so we are urging parents and guardians to make sure everyone washes their hands thoroughly with warm soapy water every time they handle and feed frozen mice to their pets and handle their reptiles to reduce risk of becoming ill with Salmonella. Both the vivarium and the areas reptiles are able to roam could be contaminated with salmonella. Good hygiene should be observed.

If you, or other family members become ill with symptoms such as diarrhoea, abdominal pain and fever, consult your doctor or NHS 111 and inform them that you own/keep a reptile. If you have symptoms, make sure you wash your hands regularly and avoid preparing food for others. Do not go to work or school until 48 hours after symptoms have passed to reduce the chances of passing on the infection.