

## **SALMONELLOSIS**

### **(Salmonella Species)**

#### **What is it?**

Salmonellosis is a disease caused by a bacteria called Salmonella. The bacteria is found in feces of infected people, farm animals; e.g. chicken, turkey, pigs, cows, wild animals, and pets (dogs, cats, turtles, reptiles).

#### **How does it spread?**

It is usually spread through direct contact:

- from person to person if the hands of an infected person are not washed properly after using the toilet
- by drinking water or eating food contaminated with the bacteria
- by eating undercooked meat and meat products

#### **Signs and symptoms of illness.**

Diarrhea, cramps, nausea, sometimes vomiting, usually fever and headache. Many people have no symptoms at all.

#### **Who is at risk?**

Everyone - the young, old and debilitated have more severe symptoms which may last longer.

#### **How long before illness starts?**

Usually 12 to 36 hours but can take 6 to 72 hours after the bacteria is swallowed.

#### **How long does illness last?**

Several days to several weeks. Even after the symptoms have stopped, some people, especially infants, may still have the bacteria in their feces for months. There is usually no treatment. Treatment with antibiotics may prolong the time that the bacteria stays in the bowel.

#### **Prevention:**

- Thorough hand washing is the best prevention. Make sure that hands are properly washed after using the toilet, changing diapers, handling pets or before preparing foods.
- Clean and sanitize counter tops and utensils immediately after the preparation of foods, particularly meats and poultry.
- Drink only pasteurized milk.
- Drink water only from a safe water supply.
- Avoid using raw eggs in foods that do not require cooking; e.g. egg nog, caesar salad dressing. Use pasteurized liquid eggs instead.
- Defrost meats safely under running water, on a plate in the fridge, or in the microwave oven.
- Cook meat and poultry to minimum internal temperature of 74°C (165°F).
- Keep hot foods hot (60°C, 140°F) before serving and cold foods cold (4°C, 40°F, or colder).
- Avoid preparing or handling any food if ill with diarrhea.

**For more information on common foodborne illness or to speak with a Public Health Inspector, call the Peterborough County-City Health Unit at 705-743-1000.**