



SOMERSET COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

7920 Crisfield Hwy, Westover, MD 21871

Craig Stofko, M.Ed., LCADC
Health Officer

Phone: 443-523-1700
Toll Free: 1-800-363-8090
Fax: 410-651-5680

Media contacts:

Christie Abbott (443-523-1711)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DON'T LET SALMONELLA SNEAK UP ON YOU

The Somerset County Health Department is urging everyone to practice handling food and animals safely to prevent the spread of salmonella.

Salmonella, sometimes considered food poisoning, is a bacteria which commonly causes food borne illnesses.

Salmonella can be contracted through eggs, undercooked poultry, and from other foods such as ground meat, fruits and vegetables. It can also be contracted from handling such animals as chicks, ducklings, rabbits, reptiles, turtles and other animals.

Ensure food safety by:

- Avoiding the ingestion of raw eggs and milk
- Sick individuals should not prepare food for others
- When cooking and dealing with food, make sure your hands, the kitchen work area and kitchen tools and utensils are clean before, during, and after working with raw meats and poultry
- Avoid cross-contamination of foods by keeping uncooked meats separate from produce or foods that are already cooked or ready to eat
- cook meats and eggs thoroughly

When it comes to handling animals, make sure that you always wash your hands with soap and water immediately after touching any animals. Make sure that children do not put their hands or any objects that touch an animal in their mouths before washing them off. Another important thing to remember; if you clean a pet cage in the tub where children bathe be sure to clean and sanitize it before using it.

Should an individual contract a salmonella illness, most cases last between four to seven days and most people can recover without antibiotics. However, some rare cases have proven serious and have led to hospitalization. Salmonella, is the most common bacterial cause of diarrhea in the United States and the most common cause of food borne deaths.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that for every 1 case that is confirmed, there are about 30 times more Salmonella cases that weren't. The majority of people who get food poisoning rarely make a visit to the doctor, thus confirmation is seldom made through a laboratory.

These safety practices for handling food and animals to ward off salmonella must be followed year-round, but the illness tends to be more common in the summer.

Make sure foods are kept at their appropriate temperature; hot foods hot, and cold foods cold (41° Fahrenheit). Refrigerate leftovers or place them in a cooler or insulated bag immediately. Always wash hands immediately with soap and water after touching animals.

For more information, please contact the Somerset County Health Department at 443-523-1740.

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