

Patient Information

Salmonella

Infection Prevention Team

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacterium germ which usually originates from animals, and is recognised as a common cause of food poisoning. The bacteria can live in animals such as poultry, cows and pigs. When these type of foods are not prepared and cooked appropriately, can cause food poisoning. There are many different types of Salmonella, most of which cause symptoms of gastro-enteritis, diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Within about 12-36 hours of eating contaminated food, the bacteria will have multiplied to sufficient numbers to start causing illness. Symptoms may be stomach cramps, vomiting, fever or diarrhoea. Symptoms may get worse for two or three days, but then normally start to improve.

What is the treatment?

Normally, treatment is not required, as the illness is self-limiting. However, where the symptoms do not appear to be subsiding, or there are complications, antibiotics can be given either by tablet or through a drip.

Can I eat and drink?

You may find that you cannot tolerate eating for a few days, however, it is important to try and drink plenty of fluids. You will be monitored in hospital to ensure that you do not become dehydrated. If there is any concern about this you may be given a drip. Try to keep to a light diet as you recover.

Is it infectious?

Salmonella can be passed on to another person if the bacteria gets into their mouth e.g. by contaminated hands or equipment. To minimise this risk you will need to be nursed away from the other patients (in a side room).

We will try to provide you with your own toilet facilities, but where this is not possible you will be given a commode in your room. Staff will wear gloves and aprons to remove bedpans.

You can also help by ensuring that you wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet. Visitors should also be advised and encouraged to thoroughly wash their hands at the end of the visiting period.

When can I go home?

As soon as the doctor feels you are well enough you can go home. When you have been without symptoms for two days you are considered much less of an infection risk and if you remain in hospital, you will no longer need to be isolated.

What happens then?

Salmonella is a notifiable disease. This means Public Health must be informed that there has been a case of Salmonella. This will allow them to investigate the possible source. Details of your illness will be passed on to him and you may get a follow up call from an Environmental Health Officer.

There is no need to notify your employer of the Salmonella unless you are a food handler or a care worker.

Where can I get more information?

There are Infection Prevention Nurses in the hospital who are available to come and speak to you if you wish. The ward staff will contact them for you. Public Health are also available for advice when you are discharged. You can contact them on telephone number:- 0300 003 0032

INFECTION PREVENTION TEAM

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