

Infection Prevention and You



How to Enjoy a *Salmonella*-Free Summer

Summer is the perfect time for cookouts and barbecues. The best way to enjoy your cookout is to follow food safety instructions in the kitchen and while grilling, thus preventing foodborne illnesses like *Salmonella*. A cookout should be a place where you share memories, not Salmonellosis.

Salmonella bacteria are a common cause of foodborne illness. Foodborne illness is sometimes called “food poisoning.” Each year, one in six Americans gets sick from eating contaminated foods. The resulting infection from *Salmonella* bacteria is called Salmonellosis. Salmonellosis generally develops within 6-48 hours after eating food contaminated with *Salmonella*. Most people recover within 4-7 days without treatment, but infection can be serious and require hospitalization for some. People most likely to develop a serious infection include the elderly, young children, and those with already weakened immune systems.

Identifying a *Salmonella* Infection

Contact your doctor if you have any of the following signs and symptoms of a *Salmonella* infection:

- Diarrhea and a fever over 101.5°F
- Signs of dehydration
- Bloody stools
- Diarrhea that lasts 3 or more days without improvement
- Prolonged vomiting where you cannot keep liquids down

The CDC estimates that *Salmonella* causes about 1.2 million illnesses and 23,000 hospitalizations in the United States every year. Food contamination can occur in cucumbers, chicken, eggs, raw tuna, sprouts, and many other foods. Therefore, practicing recommended food safety procedures is important for all foods, not just raw meat.

Salmonellosis is most common during summer months because of warm temperatures, delayed refrigeration, and foods-associated with summer. Most recently, you may have heard of pre-cut melon being recalled due to *Salmonella*. Melons can become contaminated through the cutting process when bacteria such as *Salmonella* on the outside of the melon get into the flesh of the melon.

How to Avoid *Salmonella*

Follow these steps to prevent *Salmonella* and foodborne illness in general: clean, separate, cook, chill, and report.

- Clean your hands often. To prevent cross contamination, make sure to always wash your hands each time after handling raw meat.
- Keep kitchen surfaces and utensils clean.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before you cut or peel them. Using a scrub brush can help reduce contaminants on the rough skin of foods like cantaloupe.
- Use separate cutting boards and knives for uncooked meats and uncooked produce.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Cook food to recommended internal temperatures: whole meats 145°F, ground meats 160°F, and poultry 165°F.
- Refrigerate perishable food (including melon) within 2 hours. Discard food that sits out longer than 2 hours.
- Call your healthcare professional if you think you have *Salmonella*.

Additional resources

- The CDC—*Salmonella* and Food <https://www.cdc.gov/features/salmonella-food/index.html>
- APIC—Preventing Foodborne Illness <https://apic.org/For-Consumers/Monthly-alerts-for-consumers/Article?id=preventing-foodborne-illness>

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