

Salmonella

This leaflet is for patients, relatives and visitors and explains what Salmonella is, how it is caught and how it can be managed.

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is an infection of the gut caused by the bacterium (germ) Salmonella which can cause food poisoning.

What are the symptoms?

Watery diarrhoea, stomach cramps and sometimes vomiting and high temperature. Symptoms occur between eight hours and three days of being infected.

How is it caught?

Salmonella is one of the most common bacterium forms of food poisoning and is often found in the gut of animals and occasionally, humans.

It can be caught from eating contaminated food, mainly of animal origin such as meat, raw eggs and un-pasteurised dairy products. It can also be transmitted by faecal contamination with infected animals or person.

What is the treatment?

Salmonella usually gets better without treatment. Care needs to be taken to make sure that the patient does not become dehydrated due to diarrhoea. It may be necessary to give some patients fluids through an intravenous drip and, in severe cases, antibiotics may be given.

Are there any long term problems?

Most patients manage to get rid of the bacteria from their guts and completely recover. A small number of patients will continue to carry the bacterium and pass it on in their stools (poo), however, they will remain perfectly well.

There are also a very small number of people who will develop Salmonella infections elsewhere in their body, bone or blood infections. This tends to occur in patients with existing problems with their immune system.

Can it be passed from person to person?

It is uncommon for Salmonella to be passed on from one person to another. However, patients who are unable to maintain good personal hygiene, e.g. babies in nappies or incontinent patients, are at greater risk of passing Salmonella than others.

To prevent the spread of infection, people providing direct care for you will wear protective clothing. It is important that thorough hand washing with soap and water is carried out by all staff, patients and visitors.

Questions and concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about Salmonella, please ask your nurse for further information or you can contact the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Infection Control team on 0118 322 6914, email: infection.control@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

How do I find out more?

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-poisoning/>

Health Protection Team Tel: 0344 225 3861 <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Simon Wells, RBFT Infection Prevention & Control, October 2022

Next review due: October 2024