



Medical Health Officers  
Alert for Physicians

# interior health

## Health Alert: Outbreak of *Salmonella* infections related to contact with live chicks

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We are alerting physicians in the Interior Health region of an outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis infections in BC related to contact with live chicks from Alberta. While the risk to the general population is low, chicks from the implicated hatchery have been distributed since March 1, 2015 to hobby/family farms across the Interior region and BC. Cases of *Salmonella* infection associated with this outbreak have been reported in the Interior Health region since mid-April. Physicians are asked to be vigilant for persons with symptoms compatible with *Salmonella* infection with onset within 6 to 72 hours of exposure to live poultry. *Salmonella* infections can also result from exposure to raw or undercooked contaminated poultry meat and poultry products, including eggs.

Symptoms of *Salmonella* infection include: fever, chills, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms usually last 4 to 7 days. In healthy people, infection often clears up without treatment. In some cases hospitalization and severe illness may occur. People who are infected with *Salmonella* bacteria can be infectious from several days to several weeks. It is possible for some people to become infected with the bacteria and not get sick or show symptoms. People who are at highest risk of infection include babies, children  $\leq 5$  years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems.

Patients should be encouraged not to attend work or school while experiencing diarrhea. Food handlers, health care workers, and day care workers/attendants should not return to work until 48 hours after the last loose stool or vomiting episode.

Actions requested of all clinicians:

1. Be alert for cases of *Salmonella* infection. Consider *Salmonella* infection in any patient with compatible symptoms and exposure to live poultry, undercooked poultry or eggs, or other known cases.
2. Test suspect *Salmonella* infections by stool culture.

Patients who test positive for *Salmonella* infection will be contacted by the CD Unit as per routine communicable disease follow-up processes.

### More information:

Public Health Agency of Canada. Public Health Notice – Outbreak of *Salmonella* infections related to contact with live baby poultry: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2015/salmonella-eng.php>.

BC Centre for Disease Control. Outbreak of *Salmonella* infections related to contact with live baby poultry: <http://www.bccdc.ca/resources/news-alerts/alerts/SEOutbreakUpdate.htm>.