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Salmonella outbreak linked to backyard poultry

Thirteen people sickened in Washington state, more than 100 nationwide

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is working with local and federal public health partners to investigate 13 cases of *Salmonella* linked to backyard poultry. Cases have been reported in Kitsap (3), Spokane (2), Yakima (2), King (2), Grant (1), Thurston (1), Skagit (1) and Cowlitz (1) counties. This is part of [nationwide outbreak](#) that has sickened 104 people in 31 states. In Washington, four people have been hospitalized and no deaths have been reported.

Salmonella is a bacteria that can be found in poultry manure which can make people sick.

Backyard poultry, like chickens and ducks, can carry *Salmonella* even if they look healthy and clean. The bacteria can easily spread to cages, coops, hay, plants, and soil in the area where they live. You can get sick from *Salmonella* by touching your mouth or food with unwashed hands.

“If you have a backyard flock, take steps to protect yourself and your family from *Salmonella* infection,” said Washington State Chief Science Officer Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH.

“Always wash your hands with soap and water after you've touched poultry, or soil or objects they've had contact with.”

People infected with *Salmonella* usually become sick one to three days after exposure.

Symptoms include diarrhea that can be bloody, fever, chills, stomach cramps, and occasionally vomiting. Most people recover within four to seven days without treatment. However, some people may experience more severe illnesses that require medical treatment or hospitalization.

Children under five, adults over 65, and those with weakened immune systems are most likely to get severely sick from *Salmonella* and should avoid handling backyard poultry or anything in the environments where poultry live or roam.

To avoid infection and protect your flock, follow these prevention steps:

- Wash your hands with soap and running water after touching backyard poultry or anything where they live and roam.
- Don't kiss or snuggle poultry.
- Don't eat or drink around your poultry.
- Keep poultry and the supplies you use to care for them outside of your home.
- Supervise children around birds; children younger than five should not touch birds.
- Separate your flock from wildlife.
- [Practice good biosecurity.](#)
- [Safely handle, cook, and store eggs.](#)

[Visit DOH's website](#) for more information on staying healthy while caring for backyard poultry.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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