

**The University of Tennessee
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Occupational Health Program**

SALMONELLA

People at Risk: Salmonella is a bacterial infection of the gastrointestinal tract of humans and animals. Dogs, cats, domestic livestock, non-human primates, birds, and reptiles are all sources of salmonella. There are also reports of Salmonella being carried in the pet rodent population. People who are immunosuppressed or who have had surgery or disease of the gastrointestinal tract may be at a higher risk of acquiring the disease. The very old and young are also more likely to contract salmonella.

Transmission: People acquire salmonella by ingestion of the bacteria either through contaminated food or direct contact with the feces of infected live animals. The bacteria cannot penetrate intact skin but can gain entrance to the body if a contaminated object comes in contact with a mucous membrane (i.e. mouth).

Symptoms: Signs of salmonella are fever, headache, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. Onset of signs usually occur 12-46 hours after ingestion. The bacteria may spread throughout the body causing infection in other organs. Death is possible with severe infections.

Diagnosis and Prevention:

The disease is diagnosed by culturing the organism in affected people. Prevention of the spread of salmonella bacteria from animals to people should focus on personal protective clothing (lab coats, gloves), facility sanitation, and proper personal hygiene (wash hands after contact with live animals or their environment cages, food dishes, etc.)