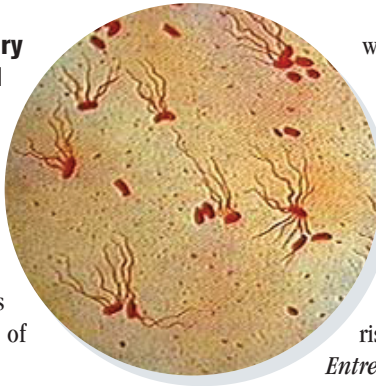


**F**irst described more than century ago, *Salmonella* is still classified as an emerging foodborne disease because its worldwide incidence has increased during the past 25 years. The problem is so serious, in fact, that the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with several other entities, has created Global Salm-Surv (GSS), a global network of laboratories and individuals involved in the surveillance of salmonellosis.



In the United States, *Salmonella* is the second most common enteric (intestinal) infection after *Campylobacter*, with approximately 40,000 confirmed cases every year; two-thirds of these patients are under the age of 20. Even more frightening is the expert belief that salmonellosis is significantly underreported—perhaps by a factor of 30 or more—by people who think it's "just a bit of the flu." In its

worst manifestations, salmonellosis can lead to life-long health problems, including crippling forms of arthritis, and it accounts for some 31% of all food-related deaths, according to the CDC.

There are more than 2,300 strains, or serotypes, of *Salmonella* known today, including the kind that causes typhoid fever. Cases involving certain strains, particularly the one called Newport, have risen significantly in recent years, but *Salmonella* *Enteritidis*—the bacterium most commonly associated with foodservice transmission—has remained stable. Some strains of *Salmonella* have become resistant to antibiotics, probably due to widespread antibiotic use in agriculture.

*Salmonella* has been much in the news in recent months, including more than 60 cases traced to Sheetz convenience stores in July 2004, and a recent outbreak at Tacos Garcia in Amarillo, TX.

## FACTS

## IMPLICATIONS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Most outbreaks are related to the consumption of turkey and chicken   | Do not serve raw or undercooked poultry, and avoid cross-contamination of poultry products with other foods and surfaces  |
| Although salmonellosis caused by external fecal contamination of eggshells has largely been eradicated, it is now believed that infected hens contaminate their eggs internally | Handle eggs with the utmost care; cook them thoroughly, avoid cross-contamination with or by other products, never pool uncooked eggs, and/or use pasteurized eggs and egg products |
| Salmonella bacteria are present in the gut of otherwise healthy feed animals  | Poultry and meat, especially hamburger, should always be well-cooked, following HACCP or other approved guidelines  |
| Milk and milk products are known as potential sources of Salmonella infection   | Use only pasteurized milk, and avoid raw, unaged or unpasteurized dairy products, such as cheese  |
| Fresh produce has also been implicated, perhaps because of contaminated water or other field conditions, as well as cross-contamination along the supply chain                  | Thoroughly wash any produce to be consumed raw—or avoid raw fruits and vegetables altogether  |
| Salmonella bacteria can be spread by infected persons, even those who may not know they are sick  | Proper and frequent handwashing is vital; infected employees should not prepare or serve food or water until they are bacteria-free   |
| The highest incidence of Salmonella illness occurs from July through October  | Although picnics and other warm-weather food-at-home occasions drive this date, improper time/temperature control is a major factor everywhere                                      |