



Safety Tips for Handling Live Chicks and Ducklings

Children sometimes receive chicks and ducklings as Easter gifts.

But chicks and ducklings can place young children at risk for serious illness!

- Handling of chicks and ducklings has been linked to *Salmonella* illness.
- Children are less likely to wash their hands after playing with the birds.
- Children have more frequent hand-to-mouth contact than adults.

What is *Salmonella* Illness?

Salmonella are a group of bacteria that can cause diarrheal illness. One of the most widespread pathogens in the world, *Salmonella* infection can cause mild to life-threatening illness in humans and other animals, including birds. Contaminated food is the most common way people become infected. *Salmonella*, however, can infect some pets and people who have had contact with pets or pet feces. Even chicks and ducklings that appear healthy can carry *Salmonella* on their feathers. In 2008, over 750 cases of human *Salmonella* illness were reported in Missouri.

How do I protect children from getting *Salmonella*?

- Do not let children under five handle baby chicks or other young birds.
- Pacifiers, toys, or other objects must not touch baby birds or their enclosures.
- If anyone touches the chicks or ducklings or their environment, make sure they wash their hands with soap and water immediately afterwards.

Important Information about *Salmonella*

Most people with *Salmonella* illness have diarrhea, fever, and stomach pain.

Symptoms start one to three days after infection and illness usually lasts four to seven days.

Young children and the elderly can develop more severe infections.

For more information about salmonellosis: <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Salmonellosis/>