

Tips to Reduce Your Risk of Getting a Salmonella Infection from Dry Pet Food

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

Hi, this is Dr. Casey Barton Behravesh. I'm a veterinary epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC. Today, we're going to talk about ways to reduce your risk of getting a *Salmonella* infection from contact with dry pet foods.

Salmonella is a germ, or type of bacteria, that's commonly spread through contaminated food, water, or contact with infected animals. This includes pets, like dogs and cats, who can appear healthy, even when carrying these germs. When people get sick with *Salmonella*, they may have diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. And sometimes, the diarrhea can be so severe that hospitalization may be required.

Older persons, infants, and those with impaired immune systems can have a more serious illness. In these patients, the infection may spread from the intestines to the blood stream, and then to other body sites and can cause death unless the person's treated promptly with antibiotics.

Pet foods and pet treats contain ingredients of animal origin, such as meat, which we know are at risk for *Salmonella* contamination. These ingredients make it possible for dry pet food to be contaminated with *Salmonella* if it isn't produced correctly.

There are some very simple things people can do to protect themselves and their families from the risk of getting *Salmonella* from dry pet foods. The most important thing you can do is to wash your hands right after handling dry pet food, pet treats, or even pet supplements, like vitamins. Adults should help young children wash hands. Children five years old and younger should not be allowed to touch or eat pet food, pet treats, or pet supplements. It's very important to keep young kids away from pet feeding areas.

Also, pets should not be fed in the kitchen to help reduce the chances of cross-contamination from pet foods to human food. Pet food bowls and pet feeding areas should be routinely cleaned and disinfected, and these items should not be cleaned in the kitchen sink or bathtubs to help reduce the chance of cross-contamination.

For more information, you can go to the CDC's website on *Salmonella*, located at www.cdc.gov/salmonella or you can go to CDC's Healthy Pets Healthy People website at www.cdc.gov/healthypets. Or you can call 1-800-CDC-INFO twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.