



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Cute But Risky

*Multistate Outbreak of Salmonella Altona and Johannesburg Infections
Linked to Chicks and Ducklings From a Mail-Order Hatchery — United
States, May–October 2011*

Recorded: March 26, 2012; posted: March 29, 2012

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Kendrick] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Dr. Juliette Kendrick, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Chicks and ducklings are cute, but they can spread *Salmonella* to people, especially young children, those with weakened immune systems, and the elderly. Jennifer Mitchell, with CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, is joining us today to discuss the risk of getting *Salmonella* from chicks and ducklings. Welcome to the show, Jennifer.

[Jennifer Mitchell] Thank you. It's great to be here.

[Dr. Kendrick] Jennifer, what is *Salmonella*?

[Jennifer Mitchell] *Salmonella* is a germ or a type of bacteria that is commonly spread through contaminated food. An estimated 1.2 million *Salmonella* illnesses occur every year in the United States. *Salmonella* can also be spread through contact with infected animals, particularly turtles, frogs, and live poultry, such as chicks and ducklings.

[Dr. Kendrick] Who's at risk for *Salmonella* infection?

[Jennifer Mitchell] Those most at risk include infants and children younger than five, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems. Young children are especially likely to develop a *Salmonella* infection because they love to pick up, snuggle, and kiss the chicks and ducklings.

[Dr. Kendrick] Will a chick or duckling show any signs of having *Salmonella*?

[Jennifer Mitchell] Chicks and ducklings can appear healthy and clean and still spread *Salmonella* to people.

[Dr. Kendrick] What are the symptoms of *Salmonella* infection?

[Jennifer Mitchell] Symptoms of *Salmonella* include diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and abdominal cramping. The illness usually lasts about a week and most people recover without any treatment. However, some people become so sick that they require hospitalization.

[Dr. Kendrick] What are some ways to reduce the risk of getting a *Salmonella* infection from chicks and ducklings?

[Jennifer Mitchell] There are simple precautions they can take to reduce the risk of illness when around chicks and ducklings. They should always wash their hands thoroughly, with soap and water, right after touching live poultry, or anything in the area where they live and roam. People can use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available. Adults should always supervise hand washing for young children. Don't let children younger than five handle or touch chicks, ducklings, or other live poultry. And they certainly should not snuggle or kiss the birds, touch their mouths, or eat or drink around live poultry. Don't let live poultry inside the house, in bathrooms, or especially in areas where food or drink is prepared, served, or stored, such as in kitchens or outdoor patios. Never eat or drink in the area where the birds live or roam. And finally, don't clean any equipment or materials associated with raising or caring for live poultry, such as cages or feed or water containers inside the home.

[Dr. Kendrick] Where can our listeners get more information about *Salmonella*?

[Jennifer Mitchell] CDC's website on *Salmonella* is a great resource. It can be found at www.cdc.gov/salmonella.

[Dr. Kendrick] Thanks, Jennifer. I've been talking today with Jennifer Mitchell about the dangers of getting *Salmonella* from chicks and ducklings.

Reduce the risk of *Salmonella* infection from these birds by always washing hands after touching them or anything in their environment. Children under five should not handle chicks and ducklings. Keep these birds outside and away from food and drink.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Juliette Kendrick for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

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