



*Salmonella* bacteria are in the droppings of many chicks and ducklings.

Baby birds may have *Salmonella* germs on their bodies, even when they are healthy and look clean. The germs also get on cages and other things the birds touch. When you handle chicks and ducklings, the germs can get on your hands and be spread to other people. If you have *Salmonella* bacteria on your hands and then touch your mouth, you can get sick.

*Salmonella* can cause serious illness, especially in infants and young children. Older adults and people with weakened immune systems may also have severe symptoms. To keep from getting sick, follow the health and safety practices on the back.

## Follow basic health and safety practices

- *Always wash your hands* with soap and warm water immediately after touching chicks and ducklings.
- Chicks and ducklings are not appropriate pets for children under 5 years old.
- Make sure children wash their hands after touching chicks and ducklings at places such as petting zoos or feed stores.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss chicks and ducklings.
- Keep chicks and ducklings in a designated area away from the kitchen and family living spaces.
- Never handle baby birds while you or your children are eating.
- Don't use the kitchen sink to clean cages, feed or water containers.



## Watch for signs of *Salmonella* infection

Symptoms start about one to three days after you are exposed. They range from mild to severe and include diarrhea, fever, and stomach pain. Symptoms usually last four to seven days and go away on their own. However, in some people the symptoms may be so severe that medical treatment is needed.

Call your health care provider if you or your child has a high fever, severe diarrhea, or other symptoms that concern you.

## For more information

[www.kingcounty.gov/health/zoonotics](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/zoonotics)  
(click on “Birds: backyard poultry”)

**Public Health**  
Seattle & King County

