



Major Complications and Prevention Methods of *Salmonella* Infection

Liu Zhang*

Department of Orthodontics, China Medical University, Shenyang, China

DESCRIPTION

Salmonellosis is an infection of the digestive tract caused by the bacterium *Salmonella enterica*. *Salmonella* are ubiquitous and found in many dairy farms and many animal species including mammals, birds, insects, reptiles and humans. This bacterium usually infects animals when their immune systems are suppressed or when they are exposed to high doses of the organism.

Both clinical outbreaks and asymptomatic *Salmonella* infections can reduce the profits of dairy operations. *Salmonella* infection in dairy herds can result in losses such as:

- Milk production decline
- Death in any age group of livestock
- Abortions
- Treatment costs
- Losses from antibiotic contaminated milk
- Increased culling
- Increased cost due to delayed culling while antibiotic residues clear
- Increased workload for treatment of sick animals
- Reduced feed efficiency Inability to sell animals from “infected” herds

Salmonella infections are also a significant public health risk for farm families, employees and visitors. Outbreaks of this disease often occur after floods or spills when livestock feed and equipment become contaminated with microbe-carrying floodwaters.

Salmonella is a highly contagious bacterium that is primarily transmitted to animals when they ingest contaminated feed or water. Cattle, birds, and rodents shed large amounts of *salmonella* during the clinical stages of disease and easily contaminate their surroundings, including food, water troughs, barns, feeding

equipment, and people working nearby. Most bacteria are shed in the faeces, but when systemic disease develops, bacteria are also shed in saliva, nasal secretions, urine, and milk.

Salmonella bacteria live in the intestines of humans and many animals. People usually get *Salmonella* when they eat contaminated food. Transfer is done in the following way:

Eating food contaminated with infected animal faeces, environmental contamination, kitchen cross-contamination, or food prepared by a person infected with *Salmonella*.

Touching or handling animals or their surroundings, especially live poultry (chicks, chickens, etc.) and reptiles (snakes, turtles, lizards, etc.). Some infections occur when bacteria enter another person's mouth through food handling or direct contact through someone else's stool or dirty fingers.

Most people infected with *Salmonella* begin to develop symptoms for 12 to 72 hours after infection. The illness, salmonellosis, usually lasts 4 to 7 days and most people recover without any treatment.

Most people with salmonellosis develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. More serious cases of salmonellosis include high fever, pain, headache, lethargy, rash, blood in the urine or stool, and in some cases can be fatal. Estimates that about 450 people die each year from acute salmonellosis. The severity of the condition varies, so if you suspect you've developed symptoms similar to a *Salmonella* infection, you should see your doctor.

Salmonella symptoms resemble those of many diseases, so doctors rely on laboratory tests to diagnose the infection. The first test that is commonly used is a test that looks for the presence of bacteria in a human stool sample. A blood sample can also be taken from a person.

Correspondence to: Liu Zhang, Department of Orthodontics, China Medical University, Shenyang, China, E-mail: yiliu@001785.edu.cn

Received: 27-Jan-2023, Manuscript No. JBP-23-20222; **Editor assigned:** 30-Jan-2023, PreQC No. JBP-23-20222 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 13-Feb-2023, QC No. JBP-23-20222; **Revised:** 20-Feb-2023, Manuscript No. JBP-23-20222 (R); **Published:** 27-Feb-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2155-9597.23.S20.031.

Citation: Zhang L (2023) Major Complications and Prevention Methods of *Salmonella* Infection. J Bacteriol Parasitol. S20:031.

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