



FROM: NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control

**HEALTH ADVISORY: SALMONELLA INFECTION ASSOCIATED
WITH CONTACT WITH REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS**

SUMMARY

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have reported ongoing multi-state outbreaks of *Salmonella* Pomona and *Salmonella* Typhimurium associated with exposure to pet reptiles.
- The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is asking providers to consider *Salmonella* infection when evaluating patients with diarrhea, with or without abdominal cramps, and to ask about reptile and amphibian exposure. Specimens should be collected from suspect cases for bacterial culture.
- Reptile and amphibian owners, parents, and persons with compromised immune systems should be counseled about the risk of contact with reptiles/amphibians and salmonellosis.
- Suspect or confirmed human cases of salmonellosis should be reported promptly to the local health department where the patient resides.

SALMONELLA AND REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS – PREVENTION MEASURES

Reptiles and amphibians (including but not limited to turtles, tortoises, snakes, iguanas, chameleons, geckos, other lizards, frogs, toads, and salamanders) have been associated with human *Salmonella* infections. Reptiles and amphibians are frequently infected with *Salmonella* and shed the bacteria intermittently in their feces. Attempts at eradicating colonization in reptiles and amphibians is generally unsuccessful and may lead to antimicrobial resistance. *Salmonella* survives well in the environment and can be isolated for prolonged periods from surfaces contaminated from reptile and amphibian feces; even minimal contact with reptiles and amphibians can result in illness.

CDC and other professional organizations recommend careful handling of reptiles and amphibians, including thorough hand washing after handling or feeding, keeping reptiles and amphibians and their habitats away from the kitchen or other food preparation areas, and not allowing reptiles and amphibians to roam freely in the house.

The elderly, infants, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have severe illness. Such individuals should avoid any contact with reptiles and amphibians. Reptiles and amphibians should not be present in households with persons with impaired immune systems, with children under the age of 5 years, or households expecting an infant. Children aged 5 and older should be carefully supervised while handling reptiles or amphibians and should wash their hands thoroughly after contact with the animals.