

Multistate Outbreak of Human *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Live Poultry in Backyard Flocks (Final Update)

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Salmonella is an important cause of human illness in the United States. More information about *Salmonella*, and steps people can take to reduce their risk of infection, can be found on the [CDC *Salmonella* Web Page](#) and the [CDC Vital Signs Web Page](#).

Highlights

- [Read the Advice to Consumers »](#)
- A total of 195 persons infected with the outbreak strains of *Salmonella* Infantis, *Salmonella* Newport, and *Salmonella* Lille were reported from 27 states.
 - The number of ill persons identified in each state was as follows: Alabama (4), Arizona (1), Arkansas (1), Delaware (1), Georgia (5), Illinois (4), Indiana (6), Kansas (1), Kentucky (11), Louisiana (1), Maryland (5), Maine (4), Massachusetts (7), Michigan (2), North Carolina (15), Nebraska (1), New Jersey (5), New York (23), Ohio (42), Pennsylvania (16), Rhode Island (2), South Carolina (2), Tennessee (11), Texas (2), Virginia (9), Vermont (3), and West Virginia (11).
 - 34% of ill persons were hospitalized. Two deaths were reported.
 - 33% of ill persons were children 10 years of age or younger.
- Epidemiologic, laboratory, and traceback findings linked this outbreak of human *Salmonella* infections to contact with live poultry from Mt. Healthy Hatchery in Ohio.
- Mail-order hatcheries, agricultural feed stores, and others that sell or display chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry should [provide health-related information](#) to owners and potential purchasers of these birds prior to the point of purchase. This should include information about the risk of acquiring a *Salmonella* infection from contact with live poultry.
- This particular outbreak appears to be over. However, *Salmonella* is an important cause of human illness in the United States. Because contact with any live poultry can be a source of human *Salmonella* infections, you should know [how to protect yourself and your family from illness](#).

Outbreak Summary

Introduction

CDC collaborated with public health and agriculture officials in many states and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, National Poultry Improvement Plan, and Veterinary Services to investigate an outbreak of human *Salmonella* Infantis, *Salmonella* Newport, and *Salmonella* Lille infections linked to chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry from Mt. Healthy Hatchery in Ohio. Public health investigators used the [PulseNet](#) system to identify cases of illness that were part of this outbreak. In PulseNet, the national subtyping network of public health and food regulatory agency laboratories coordinated by CDC, DNA "fingerprints" of *Salmonella* bacteria are obtained through diagnostic testing with pulsed-field gel electrophoresis, or PFGE, to identify cases of illness that were part of this outbreak.

A total of 195 persons infected with the outbreak strains of *Salmonella* Infantis, *Salmonella* Newport, and *Salmonella* Lille were reported from 27 states: Alabama (4), Arizona (1), Arkansas (1), Delaware (1), Georgia (5), Illinois (4), Indiana (6), Kansas (1), Kentucky (11), Louisiana (1), Maryland (5), Maine (4), Massachusetts (7), Michigan (2), North Carolina (15), Nebraska (1), New Jersey (5), New York (23), Ohio (42), Pennsylvania (16), Rhode Island (2), South Carolina (2), Tennessee (11), Texas (2), Virginia (9), Vermont (3), and West Virginia (11).

Among 191 persons for whom information was available, illness onset dates ranged from March 1, 2012 to September 24, 2012. Ill persons ranged in age from less than 1 year to 100 years, with a median age of 32 years. Fifty-four percent of ill persons were female. Among 107 persons with available information, 36 (34%) reported being hospitalized. Two deaths were reported, one in New York and one in Maryland, but it is unclear whether *Salmonella* infection contributed to either of these deaths.

This particular outbreak appears to be over. However, it is important to remember that contact with live poultry, including baby or adult birds, can be a source of human *Salmonella* infections. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in the area where

they live and roam. Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.

It is important for mail-order hatcheries, agricultural feed stores, and others that sell or display chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry to provide health-related information to owners and potential purchasers of these birds prior to the point of purchase. This should include information about the risk of acquiring a *Salmonella* infection from contact with live poultry. [Additional recommendations are available.](#)

Salmonella is an important cause of human illness in the United States. More information about infections and steps people can take to reduce their risk of infection can be found on the CDC [Salmonella Web Page](#).

Investigation of the Outbreak

Epidemiologic, laboratory, and traceback investigations conducted by officials in local, state, and federal public health, agriculture, and regulatory agencies linked this outbreak to chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry from Mt. Healthy Hatchery in Ohio.

In interviews, ill persons answered questions about contact with animals and foods consumed during the week before becoming ill. Seventy-nine (79%) of 100 ill persons interviewed reported contact with live poultry (e.g., chicks, ducklings, turkeys) before becoming ill. The median time from acquiring baby poultry and illness onset was 19 days, with a range of 3 to 90 days. Live poultry were purchased from agricultural feed stores or direct from the mail-order hatchery. Ill persons reported purchasing live poultry for backyard flocks to produce eggs or meat, or to keep as pets. Forty-seven (87%) of 54 ill persons with available purchase information reported buying chicks and ducklings that were sourced from a single mail-order hatchery in Ohio, Mt. Healthy Hatchery.

Findings of multiple traceback investigations of live poultry from homes of ill persons have identified Mt. Healthy Hatchery in Ohio as the source of chicks and other live poultry. The owners of the mail-order hatchery are working closely with public health and agriculture officials to address the outbreak. Mt. Healthy Hatchery is a participant in the USDA National Poultry

Improvement Plan program. This program is intended to eliminate certain strains of *Salmonella* that cause illness in poultry breeding flocks and hatcheries, but it does not certify that these poultry are free from other strains of *Salmonella* that may cause human illness.

Live poultry infected with *Salmonella* can appear healthy and clean but still shed *Salmonella* germs that can make people sick. Because live poultry from Mt. Healthy Hatchery may live in backyard flocks for long periods of time, it is important to be aware of the risk of *Salmonella* infection from these birds, as well as all live poultry, and to follow the [Advice to Consumers](#).