

Investigation of a *Salmonella* Infection Linked to Rattlesnake Pills

Media Statement

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Contact: [Media Relations](#),

(404) 639-3286

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment have linked one person's *Salmonella* Oranienburg infection to taking rattlesnake pills. Rattlesnake pills are often marketed as remedies for various conditions, such as cancer and HIV infection. These pills contain dehydrated rattlesnake meat ground into a powder and put into pill form. CDC recommends that you talk to your health care provider if you are considering taking rattlesnake pills, especially if you are in a group more likely to get a severe *Salmonella* infection.

Epidemiologic and laboratory evidence indicate that one person in Kansas became sick after taking rattlesnake pills purchased in Mexico. The ill person reported taking rattlesnake pills in the week before getting sick. Advanced laboratory testing called whole genome sequencing showed that the *Salmonella* that made the person sick matched the *Salmonella* found in rattlesnake pills from Mexico collected in an earlier, unrelated investigation.

Reptiles and their meat can carry *Salmonella* and make people sick. Past outbreak investigations have identified rattlesnake pills as a source of human *Salmonella* infections.

People in the following groups are more likely to get a severe *Salmonella* infection: People with weakened immune systems, including people who are receiving chemotherapy or have HIV; pregnant women; children younger than 5 years; and older adults. If you get sick after taking rattlesnake pills, contact your health care provider.