

Investigation Update: *Salmonella* Outbreak, August 2026

For Everyone

[Sept. 18, 2026, visit link for details.](#)

Key points

Public health officials are investigating a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* infections linked to contact with pet turtles. Half of the sick people are children younger than 5 years old. Although any turtle can carry *Salmonella* germs that can spread to you and make you sick, turtles with shells less than 4 inches long are a known source of illness. Always take steps to stay healthy around pet turtles.



Latest update

September 18, 2026

CDC and public health officials in several states are collecting [different types of data](#) to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Paratyphi B Variant L(+) Tartrate + infections. Half of the sick people are children younger than 5 years old.

Epidemiologic data show that contact with pet turtles is making people sick.

Epidemiologic Data

Cases

Total cases

20 (majority children)

States

12

Hospitalizations

5 (36%) of 14 people with information available

Deaths

0

Illnesses started on dates ranging from June 6, 2026, to August 22, 2026. The true number of sick people in an outbreak is likely much higher than the number reported, and the outbreak may not be limited to the states with known illnesses. This is because many people recover without medical care and are not tested for *Salmonella*. In addition, recent illnesses may not yet be reported as it usually takes 3 to 4 weeks to determine if a sick person is part of an outbreak.

Demographics

Public health officials collect many different types of information from sick people, including their age, race, ethnicity, other demographics, and the animals they came into contact with in the week before they got sick. This information provides clues to help investigators identify the source of the outbreak.

The table below has information about sick children in the outbreak ("n" is the number of people with information available for each demographic).

Age

(n=20)

Range from <1 to 36 years

Median age of 5 years

50% under 5 years

20% ≤1 year

Sex**(n=20)**

60% female

40% male

Race**(n=15)**

53% White

33% African American/Black

7% Native American or Alaska Native

7% reported more than one race

Ethnicity**(n=15)**

53% non-Hispanic

47% Hispanic

State and local public health officials are interviewing ill people or parents about the animals they or their children came into contact with the week before they got sick. Among 14 people with available information, 11 (79%) had contact with pet turtles before getting sick. Of the 7 people who reported the size of the pet turtle, 6 (86%) reported contact with pet turtles with shells less than 4 inches long.

Laboratory and traceback data

Public health investigators are using the [PulseNet](#) system to identify illnesses that may be part of this outbreak. CDC PulseNet manages a national database of DNA fingerprints of bacteria that cause gastrointestinal illnesses. DNA fingerprinting is performed on bacteria using a method called [whole genome sequencing \(WGS\)](#).

WGS showed that bacteria from sick people's samples are closely related genetically. This means that people in this outbreak likely got sick from the same type of animal.

Based on [WGS analysis](#), bacteria from 20 people's samples did not predict resistance to any antibiotics. More information is available at the [National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System \(NARMS\)](#) site.

Turtles were purchased at multiple locations including pet stores, flea markets, and a reptile expo. Three people also reported receiving the turtle as a gift. A common turtle supplier has not been identified.

Public health actions

CDC advises that you always take steps to stay healthy around your pet turtle, such as washing your hands, playing safely, and keeping supplies and the pet area clean. While some of the turtles in this outbreak had a shell longer than 4 inches, some had shells less than 4 inches.

Do not buy small turtles with shells less than 4 inches long. A [federal law](#) bans the sale and distribution of these turtles as pets.