

MCHD HEALTH BLOG

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Public Health
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MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



BACKYARD POULTRY AND SALMONELLA

Did you know proper handling of backyard poultry is very important to your health?

Backyard poultry, such as chickens and ducks, can carry Salmonella germs even if they look healthy and clean. These germs can easily spread to anything in the areas where the poultry live and roam. You can get sick from touching your backyard poultry or anything in their environment and then touching your mouth or food and swallowing Salmonella germs.

With the Morgan County Fair beginning this week, many people are expected to touch or handle chickens and ducks. If you or someone you know may be handling backyard poultry at home or at the fair, here are a few tips for how to handle them safely:

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water immediately after touching chickens or ducks. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- Keep your mouth away from your poultry. Don't kiss, cuddle, eat or drink around them. This can spread Salmonella through your mouth to the rest of your body, putting you at risk for getting sick.
- Watch your kids around poultry, making sure that they also wash their hands immediately after touching them. Young children are most likely to get sick from Salmonella.
- Always ask before petting any type of animal.
- Handle eggs safely. Collect them often, throw away cracked eggs, and rub off dirt rather than washing them. Don't forget to keep eggs refrigerated to slow the growth of germs and fully cook them (until firm or to 160°F) to kill all germs.

What are the symptoms of salmonella? Most people who get sick from Salmonella have diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps. Symptoms usually begin 6 hours to 6 days after infection and last 4 to 7 days. Call your healthcare provider if you are experiencing symptoms. For more information about Salmonella, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/>.