Salmonella Gastroenteritis

Salmonella gastroenteritis is an infection that is caused by a bacteria. **Salmonella gastroenteritis usually occurs after eating meat, eggs, dairy products, or poultry that is contaminated with the bacteria. Handle these foods properly.** Wash hands and counters thoroughly after handling or preparing these foods, and always cook them thoroughly. Doing these things regularly will prevent future infections with this bacteria.

SYMPTOMS

Typical symptoms of this infection include diarrhea, belly (*abdominal*) cramps , fever, feeling sick to your stomach (*nausea*), and occasional vomiting.

Symptoms of Salmonella gastroenteritis usually start 6 to 48 hours after eating the infected food. This is usually mild and lasts one to seven days. Medicine that kills bacteria (*antibiotics*) usually will not shorten the course of the illness or improve symptoms. Antibiotics are occasionally prescribed for severe infections in elderly persons, infants, or people with immune problems such as AIDS or those on chemotherapy. Home treatment is all that is usually required for symptom resolution. Infants and young children may quickly become dehydrated if diarrhea continues along with vomiting. Therefore, medications, usually in suppository form, may be given to control nausea and vomiting if present. Medications are generally not given for diarrhea. If medication to decrease diarrhea is taken, this slows the elimination of the bacteria from the bowel (*gastrointestinal tract*) and may slow down the healing process.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAUSEA AND VOMITING

- For infants: Use medication for fluid restoration like an oral rehydration solution (ORS). After correction of dehydration (loss of body fluids), other clear liquids that are appealing to the child may be added.
- For infants and children: Record fluid intake and urine output. Dry diapers for longer than usual may indicate dehydration. Diet may be advanced as tolerated.
- For children and adults: Drink small amounts of fluids frequently. Drink at least 2 quarts a day for an adult or as your caregiver suggests for a child. Take sips often. Do not overload your stomach with too much fluid at one time. This may worsen nausea.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. Do not give aspirin to children because of the association with Reye's Syndrome.
- Until your diarrhea is under control you should drink clear liquids only. That is anything you can see through such as water, broth, apple juice, or soft drinks.
- Once you are tolerating clear liquids and keeping them down, you may progress to full liquids, soups, juices, and ice cream or sherbet. If they are well tolerated, begin to add solid foods to your diet.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIARRHEA

Avoid:

- Milk.
- Fruits.
- Tobacco.
- Alcohol.
- Extremely hot or cold fluids.
- Too much intake of anything at one time.

When your diarrhea stops you may add the following foods which help the stool to become more formed:

- Rice.
- Banana.
- Dry Toast
- Apples without the skin.

Once these foods are tolerated you may add low-fat yogurt and low-fat cottage cheese. They will restore the normal bacterial balance in your bowel.

Wash your hands well after using the bathroom. This will avoid the spreading of Salmonella or other bacteria or viruses to other persons in your home.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You are unable to keep fluids down.
- Vomiting or diarrhea becomes persistent.
- Abdominal pain develops or increases or localizes. Right sided pain can be appendicitis and left sided pain in adults can be diverticulitis.
- You develop an oral temperature of 101° F (38.3 ° C), or as your caregiver suggests, for over 3 days.
- Diarrhea becomes excessive or contains blood or mucus.
- You experience excessive weakness, dizziness, fainting, or extreme thirst.
- You experience significant weight loss. Checking weight 2 to 3 times per day in babies and children will help verify enough fluid replacement. Your caregiver will tell you what loss should concern you.

Record your current weight. Compare this to your home scale. Record all weights and time and date weighed. Try to check weight at the same times every day.

Document Released: 04/07/2004 Document Re-Released: 04/05/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.