

Reptile-Associated Salmonellosis

Reptiles carry *Salmonella* bacteria, which can make people sick, but reptiles may not appear to be sick.

Below are recommendations for preventing transmission of *Salmonella* bacteria from reptiles to humans:

- ◆ Persons should always wash their hands thoroughly with soap and running water after handling reptiles or reptile cages or after contact with reptile feces or the water from reptile containers or aquariums. Wash your hands before you touch your mouth.
- ◆ Persons at increased risk for infection or serious complications of salmonellosis, such as children younger than 5 years of age, the elderly, and persons whose immune systems have been weakened by pregnancy, disease (for example, cancer), or certain medical treatments (for example, chemotherapy), should avoid contact with reptiles and any items that have been in contact with reptiles.
- ◆ Reptiles should be kept out of households or facilities that include children younger than 5 years of age, the elderly, or persons whose immune systems have been weakened by pregnancy, disease (for example, cancer), or certain medical treatments (for example, chemotherapy). Families expecting a new child should remove any reptile from the home before the infant arrives.
- ◆ Reptiles should not be allowed to roam freely throughout the home or living area. Wash and disinfect surfaces that the reptile or its cage has contacted.
- ◆ Reptiles should be kept out of kitchens and other areas where food or drink is prepared or consumed. Kitchen sinks should not be used to bathe reptiles or



to wash their dishes, cages, or aquariums. If bathtubs are used for these purposes, they should be cleaned thoroughly and disinfected with bleach. Wear disposable gloves when washing the dishes, cages, or aquariums.

Contact your local health department if you have questions about *Salmonella*.



Zoonosis Control

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