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**State of Ohio investigating outbreak of infections caused by *Salmonella***

*Departments of Health and Agriculture advise Ohioans to take precautions when handling live poultry*

Columbus -- State officials report that eight separate *Salmonella* illnesses in Ohio are part of a multistate outbreak associated with chicks and/or ducklings purchased this year at agricultural supply stores sourced from an Ohio hatchery. These birds were sold at numerous agricultural outlets across the state and with these confirmed reports of *Salmonella* infections health officials are encouraging any purchaser of baby chicks this year to use caution in their handling and care.

The eight ill individuals range in age from 3 months to 76 years and live in Ashtabula, Columbiana, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Licking, Medina and Wood counties. Specimens obtained from chicks belonging to one of the Ohio cases yielded the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Altona.

"I encourage anyone who purchases baby chickens or ducklings to use caution when handling the birds and to always thoroughly wash their hands after touching them," said ODH Director Ted Wymyslo, M.D.

The Ohio Departments of Health and Agriculture are working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Poultry Improvement Plan, and Ohio's local health departments in responding to the outbreak.

"We encourage all agricultural supply stores that sell chickens and ducklings to post information on safe handling techniques of these birds," said Ohio Agriculture Director James Zehringer. "The CDC worked with the poultry industry and state agencies to offer a consumer information poster which can be downloaded from the CDC, ODH or from the Ohio Department of Agriculture."

Nationwide, a majority of individuals with available information reported exposure to chicks and/or ducklings purchased at different locations of a national agricultural feed store that reported obtaining their chicks and ducklings from an Ohio based company, Mt. Healthy Hatchery. Both businesses have been working with state and federal officials to investigate the outbreak and to stop additional individuals from becoming ill. Other companies may have also received and distributed infected chicks and ducklings.




The CDC has investigated multiple *Salmonella* outbreaks associated with live chicks and ducklings. There have been 30 such outbreaks since the 1990s.

It is important to remember that healthy, live chicks, ducklings and other poultry are potentially infected with *Salmonella*. The Ohio Departments of Health and Agriculture encourage Ohioans to follow these precautions.

### **Advice to Consumers**

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam. Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer until you are able to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Clean any equipment or materials associated with raising or caring for live poultry outside the house, such as cages or feed or water containers.
- Do not let children younger than 5 years of age, elderly persons or people with weak immune systems handle or touch chicks, ducklings or other live poultry. These individuals should also avoid entering the area where the poultry live. Do not let live poultry inside the house, in bathrooms or especially in areas where food or drink is prepared, served or stored, such as kitchens or outdoor patios.
- Do not snuggle or kiss the birds, touch your mouth or eat or drink around live poultry.

### **Advice to Mail-order Hatcheries and Feed Stores Who Sell or Display Live Poultry**

- Mail-order hatcheries, agricultural feed stores, and others who sell or display chicks, ducklings and other live poultry should provide health-related information to owners and potential purchasers of these birds prior to the point of purchase. This should include information about the risk of acquiring a *Salmonella* infection from contact with live poultry.
- An example flyer on the risk of human *Salmonella* infections from contact with live poultry and prevention recommendations is available in [English](#)  [PDF - 795 KB] and [Spanish](#)  [PDF - 726 KB].
- More information on displaying animals in public settings can be found in the [2011 Compendium of Measures to Prevent Diseases Associated with Animals in Public Settings](#)  [PDF - 1,300 KB]

For more information visit the CDC Web sites listed below:

<http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/altona-baby-chicks/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/SalmonellaPoultry/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/salmonellababybirds/>