

Increased *Salmonella* activity in Toronto

As of February 28, Toronto Public Health (TPH) has received reports of 114 cases of salmonellosis in 2012 (as compared to the previous 10-year average of 70 cases for the same period). This increased activity is affecting individuals across the city and related to several potential sources.

The known clusters of recent *Salmonella* infection include:

- 1) a large catered event in York Region on February 11 that resulted in transmission of *S. typhimurium* to numerous attendees who continue to report illness since that time;
- 2) an outbreak of a less common species of *Salmonella* (*S. heidelberg*) across the GTA. This is under investigation by Public Health Ontario;
- 3) an increase of *S. enteritidis* (the most common strain of *Salmonella* reported in Toronto) linked to recent travel to Cuba

In addition, with a general increase in circulating *Salmonella* infection there is higher chance of person-to-person transmission.

TPH Recommends the Following

- Consider salmonellosis in the differential diagnosis of patients presenting with signs and symptoms of gastroenteritis.
 - Symptoms usually occur within 6 to 72 hours after exposure and may last 2 to 5 days.
 - Symptoms include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and fever.
- Infants, elderly and immunocompromised individuals are at higher risk of bacteremia. Extraintestinal focal infections (e.g., arthritis, meningitis, pneumonia) can occur in those with bacteremia.
- Remind ill patients of the potential for transmission to others.
- Emphasize the importance of proper hand hygiene and safe food handling practices.
- Public Health requires individuals infected with *Salmonella* who work in or attend high risk environments such as food premises and child care facilities to be excluded from these settings until symptom-free for 24 hours (or until cleared with two negative stool specimens if asymptomatic with poor hygiene practices).

Testing for *Salmonella*

Salmonella infection is confirmed by culture.

- Stool specimens should be collected in the appropriate stool transport media.
http://www.oahpp.ca/services/documents/specimen-collection-guide/kit-instruction-sheets/ki_fab.pdf
- If bacteremia is suspected, two sets of blood cultures should be collected.
- Specimens should be sent to a local laboratory for testing.

Reporting *Salmonella* infection

Salmonellosis is reportable to the local Medical Officer of Health. Please fax reports of confirmed cases of salmonellosis to Toronto Public Health's surveillance unit at 416-392-0047 at any time (24-hour fax line).