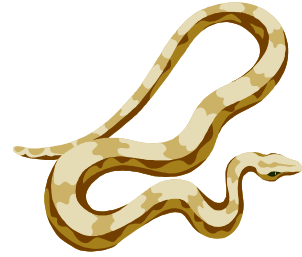


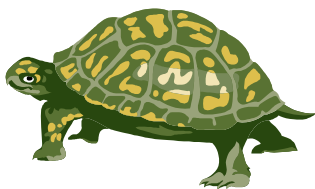
# Health Alert



## Attention Reptile Owners

Reptiles (iguanas, snakes, lizards, turtles) have been known to transmit salmonella bacteria, resulting in diarrhea and fever in pet handlers. **Salmonella infection can be life threatening in very young children, the immune compromised and the elderly.** Although reptiles can be enjoyable pets, reptile owners should be aware of certain common sense precautions to prevent salmonella infections.

Generally, people become infected with salmonella from eating undercooked meat and eggs, but salmonella infection can also result from accidental ingestion of animal droppings from reptiles and other pets such as ducklings, chicks, etc. Pet owners get the disease when they forget to wash their hands after handling the animal or cleaning the cage. They can also spread salmonella to others in their household by hand-to-hand contact.



**Please follow these guidelines to prevent the spread of salmonella:**

- Anyone who comes into contact with reptiles must wash their hands with warm soapy water after each contact with the pet or the cage litter.
- Keep reptiles out of the kitchen and off surfaces where food is prepared to prevent contamination of food.
- Infants, young children, people with compromised immune systems and the elderly may be at increased risk of infection and should avoid contact with the pet or cage litter.
- If any family member develops diarrhea which lasts for more than a day, consult a physician.

**For more information,  
call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000.**