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### **Salmonella risk from spring chicks**

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- It can be hard to resist fluffy chicks and ducklings, but they should be handled with care, because under all that cuteness Salmonella germs may be lurking.

Salmonella is a common bacteria found in the droppings of poultry. While Salmonella usually does not make the birds sick, it can cause illness when passed to people. Salmonella can cause diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and abdominal cramps lasting four to seven days or more. Infants, seniors, and those with weakened immune systems are more likely than others to develop severe illness, so they should be extra cautious.

Chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys can carry the Salmonella germ in their droppings and on their bodies, even when they appear healthy and clean. Salmonella germs can also be found in cages, coops, and the environment where the birds live and roam. All poultry can carry Salmonella, but chicks are especially likely carriers.

Follow these recommendations to help protect yourself and others:

- Children younger than five years of age, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems should never handle or touch live poultry.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after touching poultry or anything in their environment. If handwashing is unavailable, use hand sanitizer until you can properly wash your hands.
- Supervise children when they handle poultry and make sure they properly wash their hands afterwards.
- Do not snuggle or kiss the chicks.
- Do not touch your mouth or eat or drink after handling live poultry until you have a chance to wash your hands.
- If you raise poultry, make sure to remain outdoors when cleaning any equipment, like feed and water containers, and cages.
- Do not keep live poultry inside the house where people live, eat or sleep.
- Always keep poultry away from areas where food or drink is prepared, served, or stored.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm Counties.  
We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.  
Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes*

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