
Reptiles are not the only pets that can carry salmonellosis. Dogs, cats, hamsters, rabbits, birds and other pets can spread the disease too. However, Salmonella is much more common in reptiles than in other types of pets.

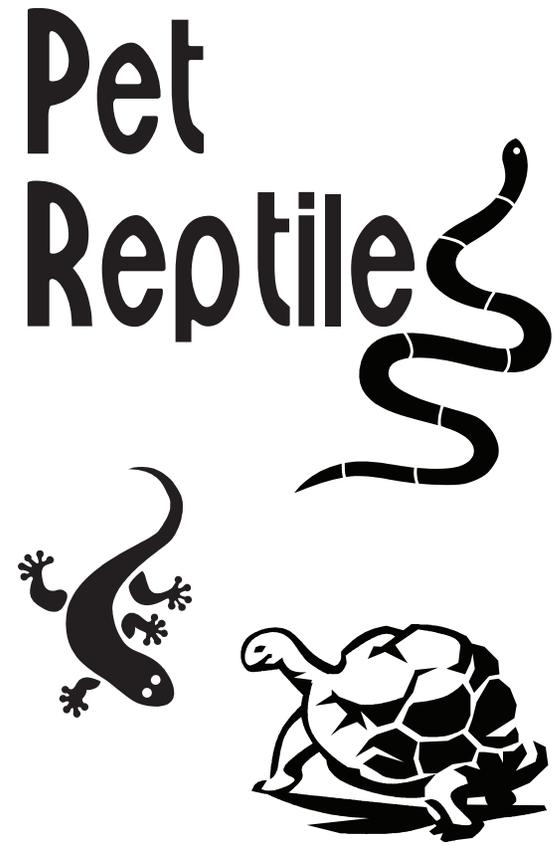
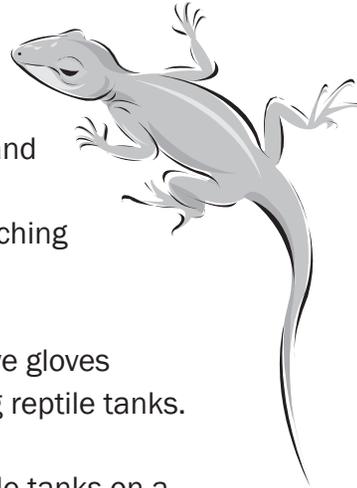
Reptiles can be found in many places that your child may visit. Teachers, baby sitters, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends and neighbors may have a pet reptile. Zoos and museums may have reptiles on display and schools, may have special guest speakers that bring reptiles on campus.



Make sure your children know how to behave around reptiles and about the importance of proper hygiene.

What you can do to prevent Salmonellosis:

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling reptiles or touching their cages.
- Wear protective gloves when cleaning reptile tanks.
- Disinfect reptile tanks on a weekly basis.
- Do not let reptiles run loose in your house.
- Do not put reptiles in your sink or bathtub.
- Do not kiss reptiles.
- Never put your hands in your mouth or eyes after handling reptiles.



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Today there are many pets to choose from. Dogs and cats are still the most popular household pets, however, many people are choosing to keep reptiles as pets.

Most reptiles available for sale in the United States are wild-caught and imported from other countries. Experts estimate that 50% of the animals shipped to the US die before or shortly after arriving here, and that 90% of those who do survive and are sold die within their first year in captivity. This high death rate is primarily due to the fact that most people who sell and buy reptiles do not know what their needs are nor how to care for them properly, and most fail to seek out what information does exist on proper care.

It is extremely important that if you have a reptile pet at home or are thinking about getting a reptile as a pet that you are prepared to properly care for it. You need to know what kind of food it eats, what kind of environment it needs to live in, and you need to find a veterinarian in your area that knows how to care for a sick/injures reptile.

Many reptiles carry germs or bacteria called *Salmonella*. Nine out of 10 reptiles may be infected.

You cannot tell by looking at the reptile if it is infected or not. Most reptiles look healthy even if they have *Salmonella*.

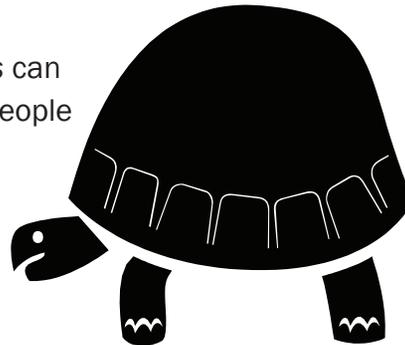
Salmonella bacteria are passed in reptile droppings. As a result, the bacteria can be found spread around the reptile's cage, its food or water dish or anywhere on the reptile's body.

If the reptile is taken out of its cage, the bacteria can get on furniture, counters, floors or carpets.

If you put your hand to your mouth or the bacteria gets into your food, you might get sick.

The disease that people get from this bacteria is called *salmonellosis*.

Salmonellosis can make some people very sick!



People at High Risk of getting Salmonellosis

- Babies
- Pre-school children
- Senior Citizens
- People taking certain medications
- People with cancer, AIDS, diabetes, etc.



Many children experience severe diarrhea sometimes with blood in the stool, after having contact with reptiles.

Elderly people are also more likely to get sick.

Most adults have moderate diarrhea, but many have no symptoms at all.

Fortunately, salmonellosis rarely causes death.
