

ACCES for Pet Health

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Peanut Butter outbreak and your Pet's Food

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The nation's most recent food recall is posing a health risk to pets. Due to contamination with *Salmonella*, numerous products containing peanut butter have been recalled in the past few months. Some pet foods and treats are on the recall list because they



The Recent outbreak of salmonella in Peanut Butter has many pet owners wondering about the contents of their pet's food and the risks of infection.

have been processed with this peanut butter. In addition, pet owners often use peanut butter to hide medications, or feed their pets other human foods containing peanut butter, such as crackers and cookies.



There are specific pet food items that the FDA has determined may contain contaminated peanut butter. You can view a comprehensive list of all recalled items at:

www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/PeanutButterProducts2009.pdf

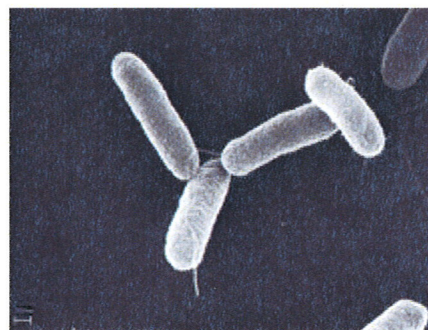
What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacteria that can cause a variety of symptoms, including bloody or mucoid diarrhea, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, and dehydration. Symptoms can occur within 72 hours of ingestion and are often mild and self-limiting. Immunosuppressed or geriatric pets as well as those with concurrent intestinal infections can become severely ill and require hospitalization.

Salmonella is also classified as a zoonotic organism, which means it can pass easily between pets and humans. In fact, it is more likely that an owner will become infected by handling contaminated pet food products. It is also possible for an animal to be a carrier and show no signs of symptoms.

Have any pets been infected?

At ACCES, so far, we have not seen any cases immediately relating to this outbreak. The FDA has also not received any reports of illness associated with the pet food products. However, ACCES has treated cases of suspected *Salmonella* poisoning from ingestion of raw foods and from ingestion of decaying or rotten food. Treatment is typically supportive with IV fluids and medication. Most animals do well when treated early. For more information on the current status of the outbreak, you can visit the [FDA website](#).



Salmonella is a bacteria that can cause GI upset.

How do you know if your pet is infected?

If your pet has ingested a recalled product but has no symptoms, there is not cause for alarm. It is possible for an animal to be a carrier of the bacteria yet show no signs or symptoms. However, it is recommended that the remainder of the recalled product be disposed of, even if your pet has not become ill. If diarrhea develops, or your pet shows any of the other symptoms listed above, contact your veterinarian. Usually a fecal culture is performed and treatment is based on these results. If your pet is systemically ill, hospitalization may be

required.

How can you prevent infection?

While the risk of animals contracting *salmonellosis* is minimal, there is a risk to humans from handling contaminated pet food products. Wash your hands with hot water and soap before and after handling pet foods and treats, and wash pet food bowls and utensils with hot water and soap after each use. You can find more [tips to prevent food borne illness](#) from pet food products on the FDA website.



Posted by **Christina Ryan** at February 5, 2009 3:12 p.m.

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