

Salmonella typhimurium outbreak traced to frogs

12 March 2013



Electron micrograph of salmonella (red) invading human cells. Source: U.S. National Institutes of Health

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(HealthDay)—An outbreak of primarily pediatric *Salmonella* Typhimurium infections in the United States has been traced to aquatic African dwarf frogs kept as pets, according to a study published online March 11 in *Pediatrics*.

Shauna L. Mettee Zarecki, R.N., M.P.H., from the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) in Atlanta, and colleagues investigated the source of an outbreak of 376 cases of human *Salmonella* Typhimurium infections occurring primarily among children from 44 states from 2008 to 2011, which resulted in 56 hospitalizations but no deaths.

For cases, the median patient age was 5 years; and 69 percent were children younger than 10 years. The researchers found that compared with cases of recent *Salmonella* infection with [strains](#) other than the outbreak strain, the outbreak cases were more often associated with exposure to frogs, most often African dwarf frogs. In a sample of 18 cases and 29 controls, illness was significantly more likely with exposure to frogs (67 versus 3

percent; odds ratio, 12.4). Samples from aquariums of African dwarf frogs contained the outbreak strain, which was further traced to a common African dwarf frog breeding facility based on patient purchases.

"This is the first reported outbreak of human *Salmonella* infections associated with African dwarf frogs, particularly among young children," Zarecki and colleagues conclude. "This outbreak highlights the ongoing public health problem of [salmonellosis](#) among children from exposure to certain high-risk animals, such as amphibians (e.g., [frogs](#)), [reptiles](#) (e.g., turtles), and baby poultry."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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APA citation: Salmonella typhimurium outbreak traced to frogs (2013, March 12) retrieved 11 July 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-salmonella-typhimurium-outbreak-frogs.html>

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