

Foodborne salmonella infections in Denmark reach historic low

1 December 2016

A record low number of foodborne salmonella cases were registered in Denmark in 2015. While travel remains the leading cause of salmonella infections, no cases have been attributed to Danish eggs for the first time in the almost 30-year history of the salmonella source account. These are some of the findings of the annual report on the occurrence of diseases that can be transmitted from animals and food to humans. The report was prepared by the National Food Institute, Technical University of Denmark, in cooperation with Statens Serum Institut – the national institute of public health – and the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration.

In 2015 a total of 925 salmonella infections were reported among Danes, which is equivalent to 16.2 infected cases per 100,000 inhabitants. This is the lowest number of salmonella infections since 1988, which is the first year from which researchers at the National Food Institute have used data to map the sources of foodborne salmonella infections.

Good results for Danish eggs and meat

2015 is also the first year since the introduction of the salmonella source account that Danish eggs have not caused illness. There have also been no registered cases of infection due to Danish chicken meat, which has been the case in four of the previous five years.

"The good results regarding Danish eggs and poultry are very encouraging. However, salmonella still constitutes a risk. Therefore it is important to maintain the preventive measures that researchers, governments and industry have jointly implemented over the years to ensure that salmonella is kept out of Danish products," Senior Scientific Officer Birgitte Helwich from the National Food Institute says.

Danish pork has been the leading cause of infections among persons infected with salmonella

in Denmark from 2012-2014. However, in 2015 imported pork has taken over this dubious first place: Imported pork was the registered source in a total of 6.6% of the cases, compared to 3.4% for Danish pork.

Most travel-related salmonella infections

In 2015, foreign travel continued to cause the majority of [salmonella infections](#). More than half (56%) of all infections were travel-related. The destinations where Danes most frequently acquired a travel-related salmonella infection were Turkey (19%), Thailand (16%) and Spain (8%).

"In order to organize prevention efforts in Denmark, it is important to know where the infections are acquired. We therefore put a lot of effort into finding out what people have eaten and where they may have travelled to and we frequently call patients up to talk to them when they have been sick," epidemiologist Luise Müller from Statens Serum Institut explains.

Other foodborne infections

Campylobacter continued to be the cause of most of the registered foodborne infections in Denmark in 2015 with 4,348 cases of illness. This represents a 15% increase from 2014 and is the highest number of cases ever recorded.

Improvements in the reporting system and changes in diagnostic methods mean that more [cases](#) of illness are registered than in the past. Therefore it is unclear whether more people actually got a campylobacter infection in 2015 compared to previous years.

Record low number of outbreaks

In 2015, only 39 [foodborne disease outbreaks](#) have been registered. This is the lowest number of outbreaks since a nationwide database for food and

waterborne disease outbreaks was established almost ten years ago. A total of 1,233 people have become sick in connection with the 39 outbreaks.

As in previous year norovirus was the leading cause of outbreaks (42%).

More information: Annual Report on Zoonoses in Denmark 2015: [www.food.dtu.dk/-/media/Instit ...015-FINAL.ashx?la=da](http://www.food.dtu.dk/-/media/Instit...015-FINAL.ashx?la=da)

Provided by Technical University of Denmark

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