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By George Sixto Salmonella Food Poisoning May

Appear in Epidemic Proportions

By ROY O. GILBERT, M.D.
Salmonella food infection is prevalent in all countries and may appear in epidemic outbreaks or simply affect one or a small number of people. So far, in 1960, some 369 cases of the disorder have occurred in Los Angeles County which, in the opinion of health officials, are 369 cases too many. Infection with salmonella bacteria may produce several types of illness, but the one of most ferquent occurrence is salmonella food infection. Although generally called salmonella food poisoning, the disease is actually an infection caused by disease-producing organisms and is not the result of poisoning by a toxin as is the case in food poisoning calls for prompt medical attention.

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animals or fowl.

In an acute attack of the disorder, the germs may be transmitted throughout the duration of the infection which may last from 3 days to 3 weeks. The disease may also be spread by infected food handlers who, although apparently in good health, are carriers of the salmonella organisms.

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SYMPTOMS OF illness vary from mild to severe depending on the amount of infected food that is eaten and upon individual resistance to the bacteria. Illness is evident in from 6 to 48 hours following ingestion of infected food, although the incubation period may be longer. Most usually, however, the individual become ill in about 12 hours.

Diarrhea is the chief sign of the nature of the illness, and this is frequently accompanied by severe cramps, nausea, and vomiting. Fever is also present, which is usually absent in staphylicoccal food poisoning.

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ALTHOUGH seldom fatal, the sickness caused by salmonella food infection may last as long as 2 or 3 weeks, whereas recovery from staphylococcal food poisoning takes place in from 12 to 36 hours.

Control measures include the thorough cooking of all foodstuffs derived from animal sources, particularly fowl, egg, and meat dishes, while ade-

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of poisoning by a toxin as is the case in food poisoning caused by certain strains of the staphyloccus.

OUTBREAKS of the illness can usually be traced to salmonella-infected foods that are insufficiently cooked or improperly prepared and stored. Often involved are prepared meats, meat pies and sausage, unpasteurized milk and dairy products, and foods containing eggs from infected ducks or hens. Dried egg powder frequently contains live salmonella organisms, so whenever this product is used, cooking should be most thorough.

Another common type of food contamination by salmonella organisms is probably caused most frequently by food infected with the intestinal contents of man, rodents, other animals or fowl.

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