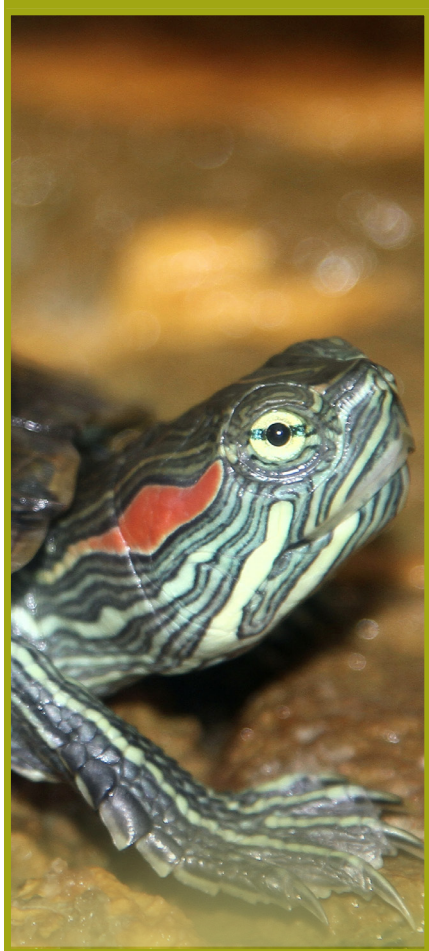
After you touch amphibians or reptiles, wash your hands so you don't get sick!



- Contact with amphibians (such as frogs and toads) and reptiles (such as turtles, snakes, and lizards) can be a source of human *Salmonella* infections.
  - Small turtles, with a shell length of less than 4 inches, are a well known source of human *Salmonella* infections, especially among young children. Because of this risk, the Food and Drug Administration has banned the sale of these turtles since 1975.
- *Salmonella* germs can cause a diarrheal illness in people that can be mild, severe, or even life threatening.
- Amphibians and reptiles can carry *Salmonella* germs and still appear healthy and clean.
- *Salmonella* germs are shed in their droppings and can easily contaminate their bodies and anything in areas where these animals live.
- Reptiles and amphibians that live in tanks or aquariums can contaminate the water with germs, which can spread to people.

Protect Yourself and Your Family from Germs

Do:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching or feeding amphibians or reptiles, anything in the area where they live and roam, or water from their housing or habitats.
  - Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer right away and then wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water as soon as you can.
- To prevent contamination, keep amphibians and reptiles out of kitchens and other areas where food and drink is prepared, served, or consumed.
- Tanks, feed or water containers, and any other equipment or materials used when raising or caring for amphibians and reptiles should be cleaned outside the house. Be aware that the equipment and materials, including the tank water, can be contaminated with *Salmonella* and other germs.

Don't:

- Don't let children younger than 5 years of age, older adults, or people with weak immune systems handle or touch amphibians or reptiles.
- Don't keep habitats containing amphibians or reptiles in a child's bedroom, especially children younger than 5 years of age.
- Don't let reptiles and amphibians roam free in your home.
- Don't bathe animals or their habitats in your kitchen sink. If bathtubs are used for these purposes, they should be thoroughly cleaned afterward. Use bleach to disinfect a tub or other place where reptile or amphibian habitats are cleaned.

For more information, call **1-800-CDC-INFO** or visit **www.cdc gov.**

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases

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