The Trouble with Tiny Turtles

While many people enjoy keeping pet reptiles, some are riskier than others. Here is what you need to know about pet turtles.

**ANY TURTLE CAN CARRY GERMS**

Like Salmonella that can make people sick.

**FACT**

Salmonella often is found in pet turtles, but it is not limited to that species. Other reptiles also can carry Salmonella.

**FACT**

People can get sick from handling turtles, but the risk is especially high for very young children and older adults.

Turtles can carry Salmonella. Salmonella is a type of bacteria that can make you sick. Some types of Salmonella can be serious and even deadly.

**FACT**

Tiny turtles are especially risky. Take steps to keep you and your family healthy.

**TINY TURTLES ARE ESPECIALLY RISKY**

and are illegal to sell as pets in the U.S.

CDC investigated many Salmonella outbreaks and found that the majority were linked to pet turtles brought into the home as pets. In fact, the sale of pet turtles has been banned for more than 15 years in the United States. Removing the number of illnesses and deaths linked to pet turtles is among the most successful public health interventions ever.

**FACT**

Always wash your hands after handling a pet turtle, especially after picking up droppings or cleaning a turtle habitat.

**FACT**

Clean your hands with soap and water after handling a pet turtle or pet turtle environment. If you're caring for a hatchling, clean your hands before and after handling it.

**FACT**

Don't clean up turtle droppings or environmental materials without washing your hands first.

**FACT**

Eating small turtles with shells less than 4 inches long poses a health risk. The small turtles can carry bacteria that can make you sick.

**IF YOU HAVE A PET TURTLE, take steps to keep you and your family healthy.**

**IF YOU ARE THINKING OF GETTING A PET TURTLE, consider these tips.**

Even if you're unable to keep turtles, you can still get the benefits of spending time with them. Consider a pet rabbit, fish, or chicken. Many are just as satisfying and easy to care for.

**Turtles can be great pets, but they aren't the right fit for everyone.**

Consider talking to your veterinarian about whether a pet turtle is right for you and your family.

**Get pet care advice.**

Find out more at www.cdc.gov/healthypets

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Pet shop

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