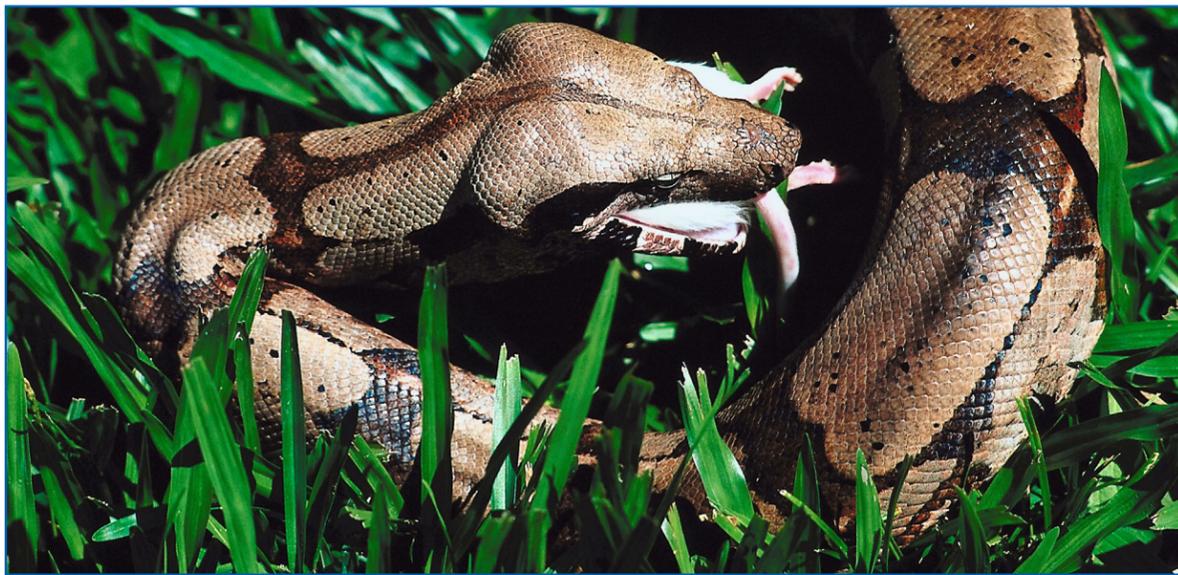




## After you feed and handle reptiles, wash your hands so you don't get sick!

### Contact with live and frozen feeder rodents (mice and rats) and reptiles (turtles, snakes, and lizards) can be a source of human *Salmonella* infections.

- 🐭 *Salmonella* germs can cause a diarrheal illness in people that can be mild, severe, or even life threatening.
- 🐭 Rodents and reptiles can carry *Salmonella* germs and still appear healthy and clean.
- 🐭 *Salmonella* germs are shed in rodent and reptile droppings and can easily contaminate their bodies and anything in areas where they live.
  - These germs can contaminate areas where rodents are housed or handled or where frozen rodents are prepared, thawed, and stored.
  - Reptiles that live in tanks or cages can contaminate their habitats, including water bowls, with germs, which can spread to people.



### Protect Yourself and Your Family from Germs

#### DO:

- 🐭 Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after handling live or frozen feeder rodents and reptiles, or anything in the area where they live.
  - Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer until you are able to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- 🐭 To prevent contamination, keep rodents and reptiles out of kitchens and other areas where food and drink are prepared, served, or consumed.
- 🐭 Clean and disinfect with bleach any surfaces where frozen rodents are prepared, thawed, and stored.

#### DON'T:

- 🐭 Don't let children younger than 5 years of age, elderly individuals, or people with weak immune systems handle or touch frozen or live rodents and reptiles.
- 🐭 Don't use microwave ovens used for human food to thaw frozen rodents. In addition, don't use kitchen utensils used for human food to provide feeder rodents to reptiles.
  - If you must use these items, make sure they are dedicated only for reptile/feeder rodent use, and cleaned and then disinfected after each use.
- 🐭 Don't wash tanks and feed or water containers in the kitchen sink.
  - If bathtubs must be used for this purpose, they should be thoroughly cleaned and then disinfected with bleach.
- 🐭 Don't keep reptiles or rodents in child care centers and households or in homes with children under the age of 5 years.
- 🐭 Don't let reptiles roam free in homes.



For more information, call **1-800-CDC-INFO** or visit **[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**.

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

