While many people enjoy keeping pet reptiles, some are riskier than others. Here is what you need to know about the tiny turtle, a pet that is illegal to sell in the US.

**ANY TURTLE CAN CARRY GERMS**

Like *Salmonella* that can make people sick.

- *Salmonella* causes a diarrheal illness that lasts 4 - 7 days for most people, but can be serious and lead to hospitalization, especially for kids and older people.

- You can’t see germs like *Salmonella*.

- Turtles can look healthy and clean but still carry germs. These germs can contaminate tank water and other areas.

**CONTACT WITH TINY TURTLES**

has caused large outbreaks of *Salmonella* Infections.

- From 2011-2013, 8 multistate outbreaks were linked to handling tiny turtles: 473 sick people in 41 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

- Ages ranged from younger than 1 year old – 94 years old.

- While people of any age can get sick, Average age 4 years old.

**IF YOU BUY A PET TURTLE**

buy one from a reputable pet store or breeder.

- Although any size turtle can carry *Salmonella*, tiny turtles are especially risky.

- Since 1975, the sale of turtles in the US with shell lengths less than 4 inches has been banned by FDA. However, tiny turtles are still sold by street vendors, flea markets, and souvenir shops.

- A playing card is 3 ½ inches long.

- Only buy turtles with shell lengths longer than 4 inches.

- Talk to the staff at a reputable pet store to learn more about pet turtles.

**DON’T TOSS YOUR TURTLE!**

Don’t release unwanted turtles. Call your local reputable pet store or a reptile rescue.

**HANDLE YOUR PET TURTLE SAFELY**

to keep your family healthy while enjoying your pet.

- Always wash your hands after handling your pet turtle or touching areas where they live and roam, especially tank water.

- If you have any symptoms of illness, see a doctor and tell them you have handled a pet turtle.

- Don’t kiss or snuggle with your turtle. This can increase your risk of getting sick.

**FACT**

70% of people remembered having contact with a turtle before they got sick.

88% of people said the turtle had a shell length less than 4 inches.

69% were children 10 years of age or younger.

31% were infants younger than 1 year old.

**WHAT IS A TINY TURTLE?**

Any turtle with a shell length of 4 inches or less is considered a tiny turtle. The tiny turtle is under 4 inches long at birth and has a shell length of 4 inches or less when it is mature.

**DON’T PLAY WITH DANGEROUS TURTLES**

Turtles can be great pets, but aren’t right for every family.

- Turtles that are over 8 inches are considered dangerous.

- Turtles over 150 years old are considered dangerous.

- Turtles with sharp teeth are considered dangerous.

- Turtles with sharp claws are considered dangerous.

- Turtles with teeth in their snout are considered dangerous.

Find out more at www.cdc.gov/healthypets