

Extra-Intestinal Salmonella Infections

Tip 1: Just because it's not in the gut doesn't mean it's not a case.

This is a misconception. A culture confirmed case of Salmonella is a confirmed case and should be reported as such.

Besides intestinal illness diagnosed by a stool culture other sites of infection include the urinary tract, soft tissue (wound or abscess) and invasive disease if found in the blood, bone or other organs.

Tip 2: Follow-Up on these cases is important and can be complicated.

Salmonella is most often transmitted via the foodborne route so it's important to get a food history even when the specimen wasn't stool. However if another type of high-risk or non-foodborne exposure is strongly suspected (e.g. occupational, farm or animal exposure such as livestock, chicks, or reptiles, ill contact, etc) then the focus of the interview should be on that aspect.

It's also important to investigate severe and fatal illnesses. Even if the patient is not available for interview, close family may be able to provide necessary information.

Tip 3: What incubation period should be used for a food history?

Determining the exposure period can be difficult for cases that don't have an acute onset of gastrointestinal symptoms. It's important to do a complete assessment for GI illness, even in these extra-intestinal cases to determine if any GI symptoms were present, even if mild. For cases having urinary symptoms only, use the onset of the urinary symptoms to approximate the incubation period.

It's also a good idea to see if any family members or other close contacts had any overt GI symptoms. Onsets for these individuals may be helpful in approximating a time of acquisition and if symptoms haven't or only recently resolved specimens and possibly food history on these individuals would be helpful.

If no possible date of onset can be determined or approximated than it's best to ask questions in the general form, i.e. "What food do you usually have on Monday mornings?", or "...at lunch on Wednesday's?". As with any food history; it's important to include food purchased and meals eaten outside the home in the past two weeks.