

Hedgehog Alert! Prickly pets can carry salmonella

January 31 2013, by Mike Stobbe



A hedgehog sleeps at the SPCA in Largo, Fla., in a Monday, Jan. 7, 2013 file photo. In the last year, 20 people were infected by a rare but dangerous form of salmonella bacteria, and one person died. Investigators say the illnesses were linked to contact with hedgehogs kept as pets. Health officials on Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013 say such cases seem to be increasing. (AP Photo/The Tampa Bay Times, Jim Damaske, File) TAMPA OUT; CITRUS COUNTY OUT; PORT CHARLOTTE OUT; BROOKSVILLE HERNANDO OUT; USA TODAY OUT; MAGS OUT

Add those cute little hedgehogs to the list of pets that can make you sick.

In the last year, 20 people were infected by a rare but dangerous form of [salmonella bacteria](#), and one person died. Investigators say the illnesses were linked to contact with hedgehogs kept as pets.

Health officials on Thursday say such cases seem to be increasing.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recommends thoroughly washing your hands after handling hedgehogs. Also, clean pet cages and other equipment outside.

Other pets that carry the salmonella bug are frogs, toads, turtles, snakes, lizards, chicks and [ducklings](#).

Seven of the hedgehog illnesses were in Washington state, including the death. The other cases were in Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Oregon.

More information: CDC report: www.cdc.gov/mmwr

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Citation: Hedgehog Alert! Prickly pets can carry salmonella (2013, January 31) retrieved 23 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-hedgehog-prickly-pets-salmonella.html>

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