

Salmonella linked to pet turtles has hospitalized five, CDC says

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Tiny turtles are the cause of a multistate outbreak of salmonella that has

led to five hospitalizations, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday.

The agency has linked an [outbreak that has infected at least 15 people](#) in 11 states to turtles that are less than 4 inches long.

Most of the small reptiles were purchased online, about half from a website called [myturtlestore.com](#).

Federal law bans the sale of small turtles as pets.

A CDC report on the investigation said the true number of people infected is likely higher, but many recover without testing or [medical care](#). In the known cases, many of those infected are children.

Typically, [salmonella infection](#) includes diarrhea, fever and [stomach cramps](#) that develop sometime between six hours and six days after exposure to the bacteria.

The illness usually lasts about four to seven days, though some people will develop [severe symptoms](#) requiring hospitalization. Children younger than 5, adults 65 and older and [people with weakened immune systems](#) are especially vulnerable.

The CDC advises not buying turtles with shells that are less than 4 inches long. The agency says turtles longer than 4 inches should be purchased only from reputable pet stores or rescues. Here are some of the CDC's other recommendations:

- Don't get a turtle if you are in a group more vulnerable to salmonella.
- Stay healthy by always washing your hands after touching, feeding or caring for your turtle. Ensure that your children are

also washing their hands well after handling the turtle.

- If you have a turtle you no longer want, do not discard it. Call your local pet store or reptile rescue for help.

State health departments can answer questions about infections in specific states.

More information: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has more on [salmonella](#).

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