

## 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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