

**Sample Paper 15****Score for Word Choice** \_\_\_\_\_**Salmonella Basics**

Salmonella is not a small salmon or Cinderella's lesser-known sister. It is a bacteria carried by some animals, and can be present in eggs, soil, water, animal waste, and raw meats. A salmonella infection in humans can occur any time the bacteria is transmitted through foods or from contact with kitchen surfaces. It is one of the most common infections in the U.S., yet it's nearly one hundred percent preventable.

If you do become infected, you will usually notice symptoms within three days: persistent headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and diarrhea. Because many of these symptoms are also connected with strains of the flu, you will need to provide a waste sample for a clear diagnosis. The good news is that in most cases, the symptoms fade or disappear within a few days, given plenty of rest and liquids.

Though salmonella usually runs its course quickly, most people would prefer not to contract it in the first place. Here are some tips to keep you safe.

Prevention begins with extra care in the kitchen. Since the bacteria can live almost anywhere, it's critical to wash *all* fruits and vegetables (including those you peel)—along with your hands and all cooking surfaces. The heat from cooking will kill most of the bacteria—provided it's intense enough. That means that regardless of personal preferences, you should avoid raw or rare meats or fish. A cooking thermometer should be used routinely for roast beef, baked chicken, ham, or turkey; the surface may appear well done even when the inside is raw.

Cooks also need to take care to not cross-contaminate by using knives or surfaces for meats—and then preparing vegetables or fruits without washing the tools in between. It is safest to use separate tools and cutting surfaces for different types of food.

Personal hygiene is also critical. One of the best preventions is something everyone has been told to do since early childhood: wash your hands thoroughly after using the bathroom. In this case, *thoroughly* means a full 30 seconds of contact with foamy soap and *hot* water. A cold water rinse will not do the trick—and it's impossible to kill salmonella by wiping your hands on a towel. If you're in a big rush, just remember that salmonella will slow you down significantly. Take 30 seconds to keep yourself healthy.

You're now armed with the best weapon to defend yourself from salmonella poisoning: good information. Don't keep it to yourself. Spread your knowledge to help those around you stay well.

### **Sources**

Hirschmann, Kris. *Parasites!—Salmonella*. Farmington Hills, MI: KidHaven Press, 2003.

Shotwell, Thomas K. *Superbugs: E.coli, Salmonella, Staphylococcus And More!: Does Super Farming Cause Super Infections?* Bridgeport, TX: Biontogeny Publications, 2009.

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial\\_viral/salmonellosis.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial_viral/salmonellosis.html)

<http://www.medicinenet.com/salmonella/article.htm>