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Salmonella risk from live baby poultry

Stanton- Baby poultry, such as chicks, ducklings, goslings, and turkeys sure are cute, but they can also carry harmful germs called Salmonella.

That's right, Salmonella infections don't just come from contaminated food- they can come from contact with animals, too.

Live chicks, ducklings and other poultry can carry the germ in their droppings and on their bodies (feathers, feet and beaks), even when they appear healthy and clean.

While it usually doesn't make the birds sick, Salmonella can cause serious illness when passed to people. Salmonella germs can cause illness with diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and/or abdominal cramps that can be mild, severe, or even life threatening. Infants, seniors, and those with weakened immune systems are more likely than others to develop severe illness. These simple tips will help protect yourself and others from getting sick:

- **Wash hands thoroughly** with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam. Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.
- **Clean** any equipment or materials associated with raising or caring for live poultry outside the house, such as cages or feed or water containers.
- **Never bring** live poultry inside the house, in bathrooms, or especially in areas where food or drink is prepared, served, or stored, such as kitchens or outdoor patios.
- **Don't** let children younger than 5 years of age, elderly persons, or people with weak immune systems handle or touch live poultry.
- **Don't** snuggle or kiss the birds, touch your mouth, or eat or drink around live poultry.

If you raise live poultry, see a display of the feathered cuties in a store this spring, or come in contact with them elsewhere, remember to use caution to ensure you stay germ free.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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