

PIJAC Alert: Salmonella – Frozen Pet Food

October 1, 2010

Please find below an advisory from the Public Health Agency of Canada regarding a number of Canadian based salmonella illness cases that have been linked to frozen rodents. PIJAC Canada is helping PHAC to spread this advisory and encourages you to share this information with your clients and colleagues who may be in contact with exotic pets.

Susan Dankert
Communications Coordinator
PIJAC Canada

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PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA : PHAC advisory

Illness linked to frozen rodents used as pet food

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) advises owners of pet reptiles such as snakes and lizards to take precautions when feeding them frozen mice, rats and chicks, as these products may be contaminated with Salmonella. There have been seven reported cases of human illness in Canada between April-August 2010 that are due to a specific strain of Salmonella that has been linked to frozen rodents. Salmonella bacteria are easily spread to others if proper precautions are not taken.

Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after feeding or handling or cleaning up after pet reptiles. Clean surfaces that come into contact with the reptiles or their food.

Other forms of pet food have been known to carry Salmonella bacteria. PHAC advises all pet owners to wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after feeding or handling or cleaning up after their pets. Symptoms of a Salmonella infection, called salmonellosis, typically start 6 to 72 hours after exposure to a contaminated product. Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Chills
- Abdominal cramps
- Headache
- Nausea

These symptoms usually last four to seven days. In healthy people, salmonellosis often clears up without treatment. People who experience severe symptoms, or who have underlying medical conditions, should contact their health care providers if they suspect they have a Salmonella infection.

If you choose to dispose of frozen reptile food products, PHAC recommends that you seal them in a plastic bag and place them in a covered garbage can. Wash your hands with soap and water after handling the products.

PHAC is investigating with its provincial and territorial counterparts whether this outbreak of illness is associated with a similar illness in the United States and whether the product implicated in the U.S. outbreak was distributed in Canada. More information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/frozenrodents/index.html>.

For more information, please contact Media Relations at the Public Health Agency of Canada at (613) 941-8400.

Pet Industry Joint
Advisory Council

Conseil consultatif
mixte de l'industrie des
animaux de compagnie

2495 Lancaster Road, Suite 202
Ottawa, Ontario K1B 4L5
www.pijaccanada.com

Tel: 613.730.8111

Toll Free: 800.667.7452

Fax: 613.730.9111