Enjoy your pets AND Stay Safe!

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Our Mission:
We promote the economic growth and development of Virginia agriculture, provide consumer protection and encourage environmental stewardship.

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You may be one of the many Americans who own a pet reptile, amphibian or baby chick. Reptiles—corn snakes, iguanas, and red-eared sliders, and amphibians, frogs and toads, to name a few—are unique creatures and can make for interesting pets. There’s nothing cuter than a baby chick. But pet reptiles, amphibians and baby fowl carry some risks to their owners, such as the potential for *Salmonella* infection.
Tamination:
The risk of Salmonella contamination is lower when feeder rodents are kept separate from all kitchen utensils and when freezing them to your refrigerator.
2. Feeder Rodents:
Several breeds of reptiles and amphibians can be kept as pets, including chameleons, lizards, snakes, and turtles. However, proper care and handling are essential for their well-being.
3. Sheep and Goat Milk:
Obtain fresh, unpasteurized milk from a reputable source to ensure the safety of your pets. Pasteurization can destroy harmful bacteria, but it also reduces the nutritional value of the milk.
4. Proper Handling:
Always wash your hands thoroughly after handling reptiles or amphibians to prevent the spread of bacteria. Additionally, avoid direct contact with the animal’s eyes, nose, and mouth.

What are the symptoms of salmonellosis in people?
Salmonellosis can cause fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and other symptoms. In some cases, it can lead to hospitalization or even death. It is crucial to seek medical attention promptly if you experience any of these symptoms.

Tips for Safety:
1. Wash your hands after handling reptiles or amphibians.
2. Avoid direct contact with the animal’s eyes, nose, and mouth.
3. Keep reptiles and amphibians separate from other pets to prevent cross-contamination.
4. Ensure proper ventilation in the areas where these animals are kept to reduce the risk of bacterial growth.
5. Clean and disinfect surfaces and equipment used with these animals after handling.