



# How Common Are Salmonella Cases?

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A recent spate of salmonella infections in the UK has grabbed headlines of late, with one product on sale in the UAE being recalled by distributors as a result. Although no cases of salmonella linked with the company have yet been recorded in the Emirates or indeed the wider Gulf region, the move is a precautionary measure.

Nonetheless, it should be recognised that salmonella is one of the most common and serious [illnesses caused by bacteria in food](#), and as such, it should be treated with caution. With that in mind, here's a rundown on the recent outbreak, as well as info on what salmonella actually is, how it manifests itself and how common it is across the globe.

## A recent outbreak

The UK Health Security Agency recently reported that over 60 people (most of them young children) had fallen ill after contracting salmonella through exposure to Kinder Surprise products. Two in particular – the 200g egg and the three-pack of eggs – were linked with the outbreak and have since been recalled in the country.

In the UAE, no such cases have yet been observed. However, Ferrero Gulf has voluntarily recalled one product made in the same Belgian factory as the contaminated eggs which infected British consumers. That action has been undertaken as a purely precautionary measure, but has brought the topic of salmonella to the forefront of Emirati consciousness once more.

## What is salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacteria which is widely distributed in both domestic and wild animals, passing freely throughout the food chain. It is responsible for causing the disease salmonellosis, which affects exposed parties normally between 12 and 72 hours after ingesting the contaminated food.

Symptoms of salmonellosis include diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and acute abdominal pain, though it's not normally life-threatening and shouldn't even require treatment in the majority of cases. The disease usually passes within about a week. However, particularly vulnerable individuals (such as the very young, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems) can suffer more serious consequences and require a course of antibiotics to rid them of the disease.



## How common is salmonella?

Salmonella is one of the four biggest causes of diarrhoeal disease in the world. In the USA, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the bacteria causes 1.35 million illnesses every year, resulting in 26,500 hospitalisations and 420 deaths. That means 0.4% of the population may suffer from salmonella poisoning each year.

Unfortunately, there is no equivalent data readily available in the UAE. However, anecdotal evidence from some of the country's top medics indicates that salmonella infections have been on the increase in recent years, with poor hygiene practices in certain restaurants and cafes believed to be the chief cause.