



## Attention Pet Owners

Congratulations on the purchase of your new pet! We want your pet care experience to be fun, educational and safe.

A wide variety of “pocket pets” can carry a bacteria called *Salmonella* in their digestive tracts. They can shed the bacteria in their feces from time-to-time. The types of pocket pets that can carry *Salmonella* include many reptiles (turtles, snakes, lizards), amphibians, birds (especially chicks and ducklings) and rodents (hamsters, mice, rats, sugar gliders, hedgehogs, etc.). People can become ill if they accidentally ingest these bacteria, and this can occur when people don’t wash their hands properly after handling the pets, cage, etc. Symptoms of *Salmonella* infection can include fever, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The bacteria can also infect the bloodstream. People at higher risk for serious symptoms include young children (especially infants), pregnant women, the elderly and immune compromised individuals such as HIV/AIDS patients, people on chemotherapy, and organ transplant patients. Listed below are some rules that should be followed to keep everyone healthy. Make sure your kids follow these rules!

### MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW THESE RULES:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling the pet, its cage, and food and water bowls.
- Do not allow your pet to roam freely throughout the home. Most importantly, do not let pets crawl on floors where children play.
- Do not bring pets into kitchens and dining rooms where food is prepared and served.
- Do not use kitchen sinks to bathe pets, or to clean their cages and bowls.
- Do not kiss or nuzzle your pet.

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For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthy Pets Website at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets> or call The Arizona Department of Health Services at (602) 364-4562.