Reptile zoonoses

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

6/10
Salmonella spp.

- This bacterium is found in the gastrointestinal tract of many animals and humans. It is particularly common in reptiles. It is found worldwide and typically transmitted through ingestion of contaminated food or water, or contact with contaminated material.
- Symptoms of an active infection include acute enteritis with rapid onset of abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, and fever.
- These infections are typically treated with antibiotics.
Aeromonas hydrophila

- This bacteria is present in most freshwater environments.
- Infection is acquired through a break in the skin (contact) or by ingestion of contaminated food or water.
- Common symptoms are similar to those seen with salmonellosis (nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea).
- Wound infections may occur as well.
- Treatment is with antibiotics.
Edwardsiella tarda

- This bacteria is often found in the gastrointestinal tract of cold-blooded animals. It may be found in fresh water as well.
- It is considered an opportunistic pathogen which can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. More severe infections may lead to meningitis, septicemia, and cellulitis.
- Methods of transmission include contact or ingestion of contaminated food and water.
- Antibiotics are used for treatment.
Prevention

- Wash your hands.
- Do not smoke, drink, or eat in the animal rooms or before washing your hands.
- Wear Gloves.
- If you are injured on the job, seek medical attention right away.
- Report the accident to your supervisor.
- Minor cuts should be cleaned with soap and water immediately.
Prevention

- Tell your physician you work with reptiles.
- Mention any unexplained illnesses, particularly if you feel like you have the flu.