Gastrointestinal (GI Tract) Infections

Cause: Infection of the GI tract can involve a number of bacteria including *Salmonella*, *E. coli* (including *E. coli* O157H7), *Campylobacter spp*, *Yersinia enterocolitica* (especially people in contact with pigs), and parasites *Cryptosporidium parvum*, *Giardia intestinalis*

Occurrence in Animals: Farm animals (cattle, pigs) and poultry are a common source of these infections, but other domestic (e.g. dogs, cats, horses) and wild animals may also shed these microorganisms. The animals may or may not be demonstrating signs of clinical disease, e.g., diarrhea.

Source in Animals: Feces

Transmission: Accidental ingestion (fecal-oral route) both directly and indirectly through objects contaminated with feces or GI contents (e.g., at necropsy).

Signs:

Animals:• diarrhea is the most common presentation in animals, but the organisms can also be shed by asymptomatic carriers
• Organisms can persist in the environment for several months

Humans:• Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain

Precautions:
• Good personal hygiene
  o *WASH HANDS* after handling animals
  o No eating, drinking, smoking, etc., around animals or their environments
• Wear gloves if in contact with animals that have diarrhea or their environment
• Immunocompromised and immunosuppressed individuals may experience serious disease from contact with organisms that cause GI infection. In these cases, face masks are recommended for additional protection.
• Use boot dip, dedicated boots, or disposable boot covers when accessing areas of potentially infectious animals
• Do not drink raw, unpasteurized milk


Additional Information: Additional information about GI diseases can be found in the Virginia Tech Occupational Safety Fact Sheets on *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Giardia*. [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/)