



The Noble Architect Foundation

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Conversations with My Daughter What is Salmonella, daddy?

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T: Why are we eating tomatoes?

Dad: You must have heard about Salmonella “thing-e-majigy.”

T: (*Chuckles*). You used “thing-e-majigy”!

Dad: I know.

T: Dad, You know about Salmonella?

Dad: These tomatoes are different. They don’t carry the Salmonella bacteria. I checked!

T: What is Salmonella?

Dad: Are you sure you want to talk about it now – while eating breakfast?

T: Sure.

Dad: It’s a form of bacteria.

T: Can it kill you?

Dad: It might. But, it definitely, makes infected people feel like they want to die!

T: What does it do?

Dad: It causes diarrhea.

T: Yuck! Double Yuck!

Dad: Do you, still, want to know more?

T: No thanks, dad!

Dad: Good answer!

Staring at her food...

T: Dad, How can they get in tomatoes?

Dad: They can get into anything and everything. Any live thing I mean.

T: How?

Dad: The bacteria live in reptiles, such as turtles, snakes, etc...

T: Turtle is an amphibian!

Dad: Right; what did I say?

T: You said reptile.

Dad: Isn’t it both!

T: I guess.

Dad: It lives in frogs too. That’s an amphibian. Is that right?

T: Right!

Dad: It does not make them sick; but once it gets into food items, it becomes life threatening to humans.

T: Can it kill you? Oh, wait; you said no.

Dad: Well, it can kill old people, very young people, sick people and also people who have very weak immune systems.

T: What is immune system?

Dad: Immunity is like resistance! People whose bodies can not resist bacteria or virus attacks have weak immune systems. But, if a healthy person eats a food item infected with Salmonella bacteria will not die but can get very sick. So sick that may wish or feel like he wants to die.

T: Dad, how does it get into food?

Dad: Do you really want to know?

T: Yes!

Dad: Through those animals’ feces!

T: What are feces?

Dad: Poop!

T: Yuck! Yuck! Yuck! Are you serious?



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Dad: That's what happened with this recent outbreak. Some feces from these animals got into the water system that was irrigating the tomato fields and contaminated the tomatoes.

T: What is an outbreak?

Dad: An outbreak; It was not the right word – I used. An outbreak is when something like this happens at a larger scale. This particular one was an isolated case. Only few hundred people were affected. An outbreak, usually, affects thousands and thousands.

T: How about spaghetti sauce, dad? Is that infected too?

Dad: If you cook the salmonella bacteria you'd kill it. Specially my spaghetti sauces! You know I cook them for days! So, if you touch contaminated water - water that was infected with a frog or a turtle or a snake's feces – and you wash your hands with warm water (and soup), chances are you'd kill the bacteria before it can try to cause any harms to you.

T: I can't believe we talked about feces during breakfast.

Dad: I did warn you; didn't I? Plus, it was a scientific talk. Did you learn anything?

T: I guess!

Dad: You should do some more research about this. Why don't you look it up?

T: I don't have any computer time left!

Dad: Too bad! Do you want to earn some computer time.

T: No!

Dad: Okay!
