Healthy Handling: Small Animals

Although rare, small animals can transmit bacteria, such as *Salmonella* and *Streptobacillus moniliformis* (Rat Bite Fever), which may infect humans. The simple precautions below can help prevent the risk of infection.

- Closely supervise children and make sure they wash their hands with soap and water after handling small animals, their habitats or anything in their habitats.
- As cute and cuddly as they are, do not kiss small animals. Illnesses are sometimes spread this way.
- Never use food-preparation areas to clean small animal habitats or anything in their habitats. If you clean the habitat in the bathroom, disinfect the area completely afterwards.
- Clean the habitat, food and water bowls in a well-ventilated area.

Children under 5, pregnant women, senior citizens, and people with weakened immune systems run a greater risk of infection; contact your health care provider for more information.