

# Reptile Rules



Reptiles include iguanas, turtles, snakes and lizards. As with many other animals, reptiles may carry *Salmonella* bacteria, which can be shed in their feces. Unwashed hands can carry the bacteria directly or indirectly to the mouth. When ingested, the bacteria can cause diarrheal illness, which may be serious in some people.



Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet reptile, its cage, its litter, its food and anything it has touched.



Keep your pet reptile and its equipment out of the kitchen or any area where food is prepared. Kitchen sinks should not be used to bathe reptiles or wash their dishes, cages or aquariums. If a bathtub is used for these purposes, it should be cleaned thoroughly and disinfected with bleach.



Do not nuzzle or kiss your pet reptile.



Keep reptiles out of homes where there are children under 5 years of age or people with weakened immune systems. Children under 5 years of age or people with weakened immune systems should avoid contact with reptiles.



Pet reptiles should not be allowed in child care centers.



Pet reptiles should not be allowed to roam freely throughout the home or living area.



For more information, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Infectious Diseases, 525 W. Jefferson St., Springfield, IL 62761; telephone 217-785-7165 or TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466.