



Customer Focus

on Loss Control

Innovative Safety and Health SolutionsSM

Controlling Salmonella

The Salmonella bacteria is found in many foods, including: raw meats, poultry, fish, milk and dairy products, shrimp, frogs' legs, yeast, coconut, sauces and salad dressings, cake mixes, and other sources. However, the source of most concern is shell eggs.

The egg is one of the cheapest, yet most nutritious, foods. Eggs provide an excellent source of protein and substantial amounts of vitamins A and B12, folate, thiamin, riboflavin, phosphorous, and zinc. Even so, eggs, when not stored or prepared properly, can be a source of Salmonella contamination.

Salmonella infection can cause serious illness—and even death—in vulnerable individuals. To prevent infection with Salmonella enteritidis, follow these rules when buying, storing, preparing, serving and eating eggs:

- Don't eat raw eggs. This includes so-called "health-food" beverages made with raw eggs, and foods traditionally made with raw eggs, such as Caesar salad; hollandaise sauce; homemade mayonnaise, ice cream, or eggnog; and raw cookie or cake dough, unless the dish was made with a pasteurized liquid egg product or pasteurized in-shell eggs. Egg mixtures made with an egg-milk base cooked to an internal temperature of 160° Fahrenheit (71° Celsius) are safe, too. Use a thermometer to make sure the mixtures reach the correct temperature.
- Buy eggs only from a grocer's refrigerated case. Open the carton and check to see that the eggs are clean and uncracked.
- Store eggs in their carton in the coldest part of the refrigerator, not in the door, and use them within three to five weeks. The refrigerator should be set at 40°F (5°C) or slightly below.
- Keep hard-cooked eggs, including dyed Easter eggs, in the refrigerator, not at room temperature. Use them within one week.
- Do not freeze eggs in their shells. To freeze whole eggs, beat yolks and whites together. Egg whites also can be frozen separately. Use frozen eggs within one year.
- Wash hands, utensils, equipment, and work areas with warm, soapy water before and after contact with eggs and egg-rich foods.
- Don't leave cooked eggs out of the refrigerator for more than two hours. When baking or cooking, take out the eggs you need, and then return the carton to the refrigerator.
- Cook eggs until yolks are firm.

Source: Paula Kurtzweil, "Safer Eggs: Laying the Groundwork," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, *FDA Consumer*, September-October 1998.

