

Are You Chicken About Eggs? Be Eggstra Safe!

Eggs are one of nature's most nutritious and economical foods. Recent [press and recalls](#) have made the public aware of possible egg-associated salmonellosis. It is important to take special care when handling and preparing fresh eggs to avoid getting sick from *Salmonella*. In the United States, it is estimated that one in 50

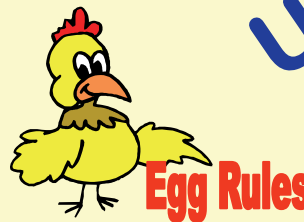
Safe Egg



consumers could be exposed to a contaminated egg each year. If that egg is pooled with many other eggs, not fully cooked, or held at a warm temperature allowing the *Salmonella* germs to multiply, it [can make many people ill](#).

According to [Dr. Barton Behravesh](#), with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are simple things you can do to enjoy eggs safely. Shell eggs are safest when stored in the refrigerator thoroughly cooked, and promptly consumed. The larger the number of *Salmonella* present in the egg, the more likely it is to cause illness. Keeping eggs refrigerated prevents any *Salmonella* present in the eggs from multiplying, so eggs should be held refrigerated until needed. Also, it is important to wash hands and all food contact surface areas (counter tops, utensils, and cutting boards) with soap and water after contact with raw eggs. Then, disinfect the food contact surfaces using a sanitizing agent, such as bleach, following label instructions. Thoroughly cooking an egg kills all the harmful bacteria; "partially" cooking an egg means that some harmful bacteria can survive which can cause illness.

Both undercooked egg whites and yolks have been [associated with outbreaks of *Salmonella* infections](#). Do not keep eggs warm or at room temperature for more than 2 hours. Avoid eating raw eggs, undercooked eggs, and restaurant dishes made with raw or undercooked, unpasteurized eggs. If you like your eggs runny or cook a recipe that typically calls for raw eggs (such a Hollandaise sauce or a Caesar salad dressing) make sure you use only pasteurized eggs. When cooking egg dishes, heat until the center of the mixture reaches **160 °F** on a food thermometer.



Clean: Wash hands, utensils, and cutting boards before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs to avoid spreading bacteria when preparing food.

Separate: Use different cutting boards for meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetables and keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs apart from foods that won't be cooked.

Cook: Use a food thermometer, especially for quiches and casseroles - you can't tell if a food item is done by how it looks.

Chill: Keep your refrigerator at 40 degrees or below to keep bacteria from growing. Always chill leftovers and takeout foods.

Unsafe Egg

