



## Eggs, Springtime Celebrations, and Food Poisoning

The egg has been regarded as a symbol of new life and has been associated with springtime celebrations, such as Easter and Passover, for many centuries. But, even during festive occasions, eggs can cause **food poisoning** (also called foodborne illness). That's why the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** reminds consumers to follow safe food handling practices when buying, storing, preparing, and serving eggs or foods that contain them during their springtime celebrations and throughout the year.

Learn more at:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm077342.htm>

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm170640.htm>

**Salmonella** can be found on both the outside *and* inside of eggs that look perfectly normal. These bacteria can cause diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and fever. Symptoms usually last 4 to 7 days and most people get better without treatment. However, certain people, such as children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems (such as transplant patients and individuals with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and diabetes), are at greater risk for severe illness. In these individuals, a *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the blood stream and then to other parts of the body, and can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics.

Protect yourself and your family by following these food safety tips to prevent food poisoning:

### Clean

- Wash hands, utensils, dishes, and work surfaces (counter tops and cutting boards) with soap and hot water after contact with raw eggs and raw egg-containing foods.
- Discard cracked or dirty eggs.

### Separate

- Never let raw eggs come into contact with food that will be eaten raw (or with utensils that could cross-contaminate other foods).



### Cook

- Cook eggs thoroughly until both the yolk and white are firm. Lightly cooked egg whites and yolks have both caused outbreaks of *Salmonella* infections.
- Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to 160° F. Use a food thermometer to be sure.
- Eat eggs promptly after cooking. Do not keep eggs warm or at room temperature (between 40° to 140° F) for more than 2 hours.
- For recipes that call for raw or undercooked eggs (like Caesar salad dressing and homemade ice cream), consider using pasteurized shell eggs or pasteurized egg products.

### Chill

- Buy eggs only if sold from a refrigerator or refrigerated case. Keeping eggs adequately refrigerated prevents any *Salmonella* bacteria in or on the eggs from growing to higher numbers (which makes them more likely to cause illness).
- At home, keep eggs refrigerated at 40° F or below until they are needed. Use a refrigerator thermometer to check.
- Refrigerate unused eggs or leftovers that contain eggs promptly.
- For school or work, pack cooked eggs with a small frozen gel pack or a frozen juice box.

### Eating Out

- Avoid restaurant dishes made with raw or undercooked, unpasteurized eggs.
- When in a restaurant, ask if they use pasteurized eggs before ordering anything that might result in consumption of raw or undercooked eggs (such as Hollandaise sauce or Caesar salad dressing).