

BACKYARD FLOCKS AND FARM FRESH EGGS

Steps to Reduce Risk of Illness from Poultry

1. Always wash hands after touching poultry, their environment, or eggs
2. Young children under 5, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems are most likely to get severe illness from germs like *Salmonella*
 - a. Consider keeping young children away from poultry and out of the poultry environment
 - b. If not possible, supervise handwashing
3. If unexplained illness or death occurs in your poultry, minimize contact with the poultry, wear protective equipment such as gloves, eye protection, and an N95 mask, and contact your veterinarian

Steps to Reduce Risk of Illness from Eggs

1. Use fine sandpaper to remove debris from eggs
 - a. Never use cool water to clean eggs
2. Refrigerate eggs promptly after collection and cleaning, or bringing home from the store
 - a. Eggs with the bloom may not spoil immediately on the counter, but bacteria can grow if left at room temperature
 - b. Refrigeration also extends the shelf life of eggs
3. Runny eggs and yolks are undercooked-cook eggs until firm
4. Cook egg dishes such as casseroles or egg bakes to 160 degrees

How Germs Spread: The Basics

Poultry commonly carry bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in their intestines. This does not usually cause illness in birds, but these germs can make you sick if they get in your mouth or an open wound. Eggs have been the source of many outbreaks and may be contaminated without looking or smelling bad. Because eggs are porous, it is important to never clean eggs with cool or cold water, as this can pull germs through the shell into the egg. Follow the steps above to reduce the risk of illness to you and your family when preparing eggs or after contact with poultry.

Germs can contaminate the inside of an egg when:

- An egg is developing in a chicken
- An egg is cracked or damaged
- The egg is rinsed or soaked in cool water

Foods that may contain raw egg or partially cooked eggs:

- Homemade ice cream
- Hollandaise sauce
- Pasta Carbonara
- Eggs cooked sunny side up, over easy, or poached

References & Further Reading



[Healthy Pets, Healthy People – Backyard Poultry \(CDC\)](#)



[Selling & Distributing Eggs in South Dakota \(SDSU Extension\)](#)



[Home-Produced Chicken Eggs \(Colorado State University Extension\)](#)



[Safety Tips for handling farm fresh eggs \(University of MN Extension\)](#)