



INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 12-94-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

## SALMONELLA ENTERITIDIS AND EGGS

Cases of *Salmonella enteritidis* (*S.e.*) are on the rise, especially in Southern California. *Salmonella* bacteria are found in many animal reservoirs, especially poultry. Consumers should expect that poultry products are already contaminated with bacteria, and therefore cook them thoroughly.

### How are the bacteria transmitted?

Egg shells can become soiled by the intestinal flora of chickens but eggs can also become contaminated internally with *S.e.* if they were laid by an infected hen. The infections do not commonly produce symptoms in the birds and they continue to lay normal looking eggs. These eggs, however, are sporadically contaminated with *Salmonella*.

### What can be done to prevent egg-related Salmonellosis?

The principles of safe food handling will help guard against egg-related *Salmonella* infection.

- Buy refrigerated eggs with clean, un-cracked shells. Keep eggs refrigerated in their carton at 45 ° F or below.
- Wash your hands and utensils in hot soapy water before and after they come into contact with raw eggs.
- Cook eggs thoroughly; both the white and yolk should be firm. Avoid recipes that use raw or undercooked eggs such as homemade mayonnaise or eggnog, Caesar salad dressing, pasta dishes, stuffing, or French toast. Instead, use pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes for these dishes. If you have an accurate thermometer available, eggs should be cooked to a minimum 145 ° F internal temperature.
- Discard cracked eggs. *Salmonella* bacteria can enter cracked eggs and contaminate them. Check eggs for cracks before you use them and discard any questionable eggs.
- Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Avoid keeping egg-containing dishes un-refrigerated for more than two hours including time for preparing and serving.

**For more information please contact an Environmental Health office near you. If you have food borne illness symptoms, contact your physician and our office.**

\*Document available in an alternate format upon request