



North Central District Health Department

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NCDHD Encourages Safe Handling of Eggs

As you prepare for the Easter and Passover celebrations, the North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) wants to remind residents to handle eggs safely. Eggs can carry the bacteria called *Salmonella enteritidis*. *Salmonella* can cause foodborne illness. It is commonly found in the intestinal tracts of animals and birds and transmit to humans by contaminated foods of animal origin.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) estimates that 79,000 cases of foodborne illness, and 30 deaths each year, are caused by eating eggs contaminated with *Salmonella*. People who are most susceptible to a foodborne illness are children, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems.

Symptoms of a salmonella infection include fever, stomach cramps and diarrhea, which usually develop eight hours to three days after eating a contaminated food or beverage. The illness usually last four to seven days, and severe cases may require hospitalization.

“Eggs are used in the holiday meal preparations and in Easter egg hunts and people need to protect themselves and their families by handling eggs safely” ” said Patrice Sulik, NCDHD Director of Health.

The FDA recommends following these rules when buying, storing, preparing, serving, eating and transporting eggs:

Buying

- Buy eggs only if sold from a refrigerator or refrigerated case.
- Open the carton and make sure the eggs are clean and the shells are not cracked.
- Store promptly in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40°F or below.
- Store eggs in their original carton and use them within 3 weeks for best quality.

Storing

- Refrigerate leftover cooked egg dishes and use within three to four days. When refrigerating a large amount of a hot egg-containing leftover, divide it into several shallow containers so it will cool quickly.
- Frozen eggs should be used within one year. Eggs should not be frozen in their shells.
- Use hardboiled eggs (in the shell or peeled) within one week after cooking.

Preparing

- Wash hands, utensils, equipment, and work surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after they come in contact with raw eggs and raw egg-containing foods.
- Cook eggs until both the yolk and the white are firm.
- Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to 160°F.
- For recipes that call for eggs that are raw or undercooked when the dish is served, like Caesar salad dressing and homemade ice cream, use either shell eggs that have been treated to

destroy *Salmonella* by pasteurization or another approved method, or pasteurized egg products.

Serving

- Serve cooked eggs and egg-containing foods immediately after cooking. Cooked eggs and egg dishes may be refrigerated for serving later but should be thoroughly reheated to 165°F before serving.
- Never leave cooked eggs or egg dishes out of the refrigerator for more than two hours or for more than one hour when temperatures are above 90°F.
- Keep hot egg dishes hot and cold egg dishes cold.

Transporting

- Pack cooked eggs in a cooler with a frozen gel pack.

“People use eggs in so many delicious recipes, and are a good source of protein, but it is very important to be reminded to heed safety precautions when using eggs to ensure a wonderful holiday with family and friends” said Board Member, Mary Ann Turner of Enfield.

For more information on egg safety visit www.fda.gov.

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About NCDHD

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) serves the communities of Enfield, East Windsor, Ellington, Stafford, Suffield, Vernon, Windham, and Windsor Locks. NCDHD is a full-time public health department with a full-time staff funded by its member towns and an annual per capita grant from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. NCDHD provides professional public health services in the areas of health education and disease prevention,

environmental health and emergency preparedness. The mission of NCDHD is to prevent disease, injury, and disability by promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public and our environment.

For more information about NCDHD visit www.ncdhd.org.