Extension News You Can Use
Why Worry About the Safety of Eggs?

Eggs may be contaminated with Salmonella. These bacteria live in the intestinal tracts of animals and birds and normally spread when feces from animals contaminate food that humans eat. In some cases, a healthy looking hen has ovaries infected with Salmonella serotype Enteritidis (SE). This means the inside of the egg becomes contaminated before the shell is formed.

An estimated one in 20,000 eggs is internally contaminated (CDC).

Handle Eggs Safely
You can reduce the chances of Salmonella infection by following these recommendations:
1. Like other foods, keep eggs refrigerated at ≤40 F at all times. Buy eggs only from stores or other suppliers that keep them refrigerated.
2. Discard cracked or dirty eggs.
3. Wash hands and all food contact surface areas (counter tops, utensils, dishes, 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.
4. Eggs should be thoroughly cooked until both the yolk and white are firm. Recipes containing eggs mixed with other foods should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 F (71°C).
5. Eat eggs promptly after cooking. Do not keep eggs warm (<140 F) or at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
6. Refrigerate unused or leftover egg-containing foods promptly.
7. Avoid restaurant dishes made with raw or lightly cooked, unpasteurized eggs. Restaurants should use pasteurized eggs in any recipe (such as Hollandaise sauce or Caesar salad dressing) that would result in consumption of raw or lightly cooked eggs.
8. Consumption of raw or undercooked eggs should be avoided, especially by young children, elderly persons, and persons with weakened immune systems or debilitating illness.
9. Consumers can consider buying and using pasteurized shell eggs, which are available for purchase from certain stores and suppliers.

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