

Egg Safety

AT A GLANCE

The Ohio Egg Quality Assurance Program offers the following recommendations for egg *storage, handling and preparation* by consumers:



STORAGE

- Refrigerate eggs at 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below (do not freeze)
- Store eggs away from foods with strong odors
- Rotate eggs so that the oldest eggs in your refrigerator are used first
- Take out only the eggs you need to use



HANDLING

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after handling eggs
- Use only clean, uncracked eggs
- Use clean, sanitized utensils, preparation areas and equipment



PREPARATION

- Cook eggs thoroughly. Egg whites should be solid, not runny, and yolks should be beginning to thicken. Scrambled eggs should not have any liquid
- Refrigerate cold egg dishes promptly
- Hold hot egg dishes at temperatures above 140 degrees Fahrenheit
- Never leave egg dishes at room temperature more than one hour, including preparation and service time

Ohio is one of only 10 states to have a state-based egg quality assurance program. The Ohio program outlines stringent guidelines for the *production, processing and transportation of eggs*. It provides step-by-step procedures for egg farmers to produce, pack and sell the highest quality, freshest and safest eggs possible.

About the OHIO EGG Quality Assurance Program



Production

The program has stringent guidelines for health monitoring of hens and environmental testing of the buildings where the chickens are kept. To ensure best management practices, third-party testing is conducted by the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Processing

During processing, each egg is washed and inspected for interior and exterior quality. Eggs are sized, graded, packaged and stored in refrigerated units kept at 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Transportation

Before eggs are transported, trucks are thoroughly cleaned. New shipments of eggs are moved from coolers at the processing plant to refrigerated trucks, also kept at 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Eggs then are transported directly to local retail outlets.



OUR Partnership

The Ohio Egg Quality Assurance Program is a cooperative effort of Ohio's egg farmers, the Ohio Poultry Association, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the Ohio Department of Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working in collaboration with the US Food and Drug Administration.



For more information, contact:

Ohio Poultry Association
5930 Sharon Woods Boulevard
Columbus, Ohio 43229

(614) 882-6111 ph
(614) 882-9444 fax

info@ohiopoultry.org

To learn more about egg safety:

www.ohioeggs.com
www.eggsafety.org

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OHIO EGG Quality Assurance Program

Setting the standard for the safety of eggs produced in Ohio

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS, Safe Eggs for Consumers

Ohio egg farmers produce more than seven billion eggs each year, making Ohio second in the nation for egg production. That leadership reflects a commitment to ensuring eggs from Ohio farms are safe and of the highest quality.

Since 1996, Ohio egg farmers have followed strict standards and programs to ensure the eggs consumers eat are safe and nutritious. Those standards were developed through a long-time partnership between farmers, the Ohio Poultry Association, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the Ohio Department of Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who together established the **Ohio Egg Quality Assurance Program (OEQAP)**.

The program was created to minimize the risk of *Salmonella* enteritidis (*Salmonella*) in eggs, to maintain the safety of Ohio's egg supply and to ensure consumer confidence in the quality of Ohio eggs. In addition to OEQAP, Ohio egg farmers also participate in other voluntary industry egg safety programs, including the National Poultry Improvement Program and the United Egg Producers Five-Star program.

In July 2010, Ohio egg farmers began following the federal Egg Safety Rule, created by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which adds another layer of consumer protection against Salmonella and enhances the foundation of Ohio's existing egg safety programs.

EGG SAFETY IS A Shared Responsibility

The egg is one of nature's most nutritious, economical, and versatile foods, and, handled properly, eggs pose no greater food safety risk than any other perishable food.

However, *Salmonella* can exist inside perfectly normal-appearing eggs, and if the eggs are eaten raw or undercooked, the bacteria can cause illness. It is always important to remember that proper consumer handling and cooking offers 100 percent defense against *Salmonella*.

Inadequate refrigeration, improper handling and insufficient cooking are factors that have contributed to *Salmonella* outbreaks. Improper sanitation by food preparers and cross-contamination from other foods are other factors that can impede egg safety. Egg recipes properly prepared in individual servings and promptly eaten are not a problem.



QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMS Deliver Results

Today's consumer likely will only encounter a *Salmonella*-infected egg just once in 84 years, due in large part to on-farm quality assurance programs, vigilant inspecting and testing regimens and food safety education initiatives.

In 2009, the rate of *Salmonella* infection was 11 percent lower than it was just a decade earlier. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the incidence of actual infection of *Salmonella* occurred in 15 of 100,000 people in 2009. It is estimated that one egg in 20,000 eggs may contain *Salmonella*, which is a 0.005 percent contamination rate.

Protecting OUR FOOD SUPPLY

Ohio's egg farmers use a number of innovations to keep the egg supply safe. Among these methods are keeping hens in modern, clean housing; stringent rodent and biosecurity controls; vaccinating flocks against *Salmonella*; cleaning and sanitization of barns; and following regular testing protocols.

In addition, modern egg farms are run with careful attention to biosecurity, with precautions to protect flocks from bacteria and disease. This helps ensure that positive Salmonella cases are isolated to one location and will not spread to other egg farms.

FAQs

How long can I keep eggs in the refrigerator?

Eggs, kept in their cartons in the main body of the refrigerator, will keep at least four weeks from purchase.

How long can I keep hard-cooked eggs?

Once the eggs are cooked and cooled promptly, refrigerate the hard-cooked eggs in their shells. Hard-cooked eggs should be used within one week.

Hint: *Fresh eggs may be difficult to peel. Eggs that have been refrigerated for a week to 10 days before cooking will usually peel more easily.*

How can I keep a fresh egg "fresh"?

Eggs lose quality very quickly at room temperature, so buy eggs only from refrigerated cases. Take the eggs home quickly and refrigerate promptly. Look for shells that are clean and whole. Buy as many eggs as you will use within two-to-three weeks.

How can I prevent getting Salmonella?

Refrigerating and cooking eggs is very important, along with using appropriate food handling techniques, such as washing hands, counter tops and all utensils that come in contact with food. By refrigerating eggs, using proper handling and cooking eggs thoroughly, the chance of developing *Salmonellosis* from eggs can be eliminated.

What is the best way to store eggs?

Store eggs in their carton because eggs can absorb refrigerator odors.


Is it safe to eat raw eggs?

The risk of food-borne illness from eggs may increase with raw and lightly-cooked dishes. It's best not to serve raw or lightly-cooked dishes made with eggs.

Note: *There is no risk at all if eggs are handled and prepared properly.*


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Flap 3.875" —>| Flap 3.875" —>| Bk Cvr 4.0" —>| Cvr 4.0" —>|

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OPA Brochure

No. 10

Four-panel roll-fold

Flat size 15.75 x 9.0"

Finish size 9.25 x 4.0"

4c process

Ins Frt Cvr 4.0" —>| Ins Bk Cvr 4.0" —>| Flap 3.875" —>| Flap 3.875" —>|



OPA OHIO POULTRY ASSOCIATION

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