

Tips to Reduce Your Risk of *Salmonella* from Eggs

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

[Jennifer Mitchell] Hi, I'm Jennifer Mitchell. With me today is Dr. Casey Barton Behravesh, a veterinary epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We are discussing ways to reduce your risk of getting a *Salmonella* infection from eggs. Welcome Dr. Barton Behravesh.

[Dr. Barton Behravesh] Thanks, Jennifer. It's a pleasure to be here.

[Jennifer Mitchell] Dr. Barton Behravesh, what exactly is *Salmonella*?

[Dr. Barton Behravesh] *Salmonella* is a germ or type of bacteria that's commonly spread through contaminated food, water, or contact with infected animals. *Salmonella* can cause diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps in people, and this diarrhea can be so severe that a person may need to be hospitalized.

[Jennifer Mitchell] Where is *Salmonella* commonly found?

[Dr. Barton Behravesh] Most types of *Salmonella* live in the intestinal tracts of animals and birds. *Salmonella* can be found in contaminated foods, like meat and eggs, or even produce items, like tomatoes or leafy greens. *Salmonella* can be found in water and in the environment, and also in infected animals, like turtles, farm animals, and chickens, even though it's important to note that these animals can still appear healthy. There's a type of *Salmonella* called *Salmonella* Enteritidis, that's commonly found in eggs and egg products.

[Jennifer Mitchell] How do eggs become contaminated with *Salmonella* Enteritidis?

[Dr. Barton Behravesh] *Salmonella* can live inside chickens, in the ovaries of chickens, even in chickens that appear healthy. And when an egg is forming inside the bird, *Salmonella* can contaminate the egg.

[Jennifer Mitchell] What can people do to help reduce the risk of getting a *Salmonella* Enteritidis infection from eggs?

[Dr. Barton Behravesh] There are some simple things people can do to help minimize the risk of illness. First, eggs should be refrigerated at all times. If an egg appears cracked or dirty, it should be thrown out and not used. It's important to wash hands, cooking utensils, and food preparation surfaces, like a kitchen counter or cutting boards, with soap and water right after contact with raw eggs. Eggs should be cooked until both the white and the yellow part, or the yolk, are firm, and, eggs should be eaten promptly after cooking. Eggs should not be kept warm or at room temperature for more than two hours, and if there are any unused or leftover foods containing eggs, they should be refrigerated promptly. People should avoid eating raw eggs, and this includes restaurant dishes made with raw or undercooked, unpasteurized eggs. And if someone

wants to cook a recipe, like a Hollandaise sauce or a Caesar salad dressing, that typically calls for raw eggs, they can use pasteurized eggs instead, to make the food safer.

[Jennifer Mitchell] Are there certain groups or types of people who are at increased risk for getting a *Salmonella* Enteritidis infection?

[Dr. Barton Behravesh] Yes, older persons, infants, and those with weaker immune systems are at an increased risk for getting a *Salmonella* infection, as well as an increased risk of having a more serious illness that can result in hospitalization or even death.

[Jennifer Mitchell] Where can our listeners get more information on *Salmonella*?

[Dr. Barton Behravesh] To learn more, you can go to the CDC's website on *Salmonella*, at www.cdc.gov/salmonella or you can call 1-800-CDC-INFO, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.