



Tips for Safely Handling Backyard Flock Eggs

There are many benefits to raising backyard poultry, including fresh eggs, but even healthy birds and their eggs can carry germs, like *Salmonella*, that cause gastrointestinal illness. Only eat eggs collected from healthy birds and follow these backyard flock egg-handling tips to stay safe.

Dry cleaning is best

Clean eggs with a clean, dry, slightly abrasive material (e.g., a cloth, brush, paper towel or egg sander) and throw out eggs with debris that can't be brushed off.

Avoid washing eggs with water since it can damage the protective layer of the shell which can lead to germs entering the egg.

A clean coop = clean eggs

Keep coops and enclosures clean and collect eggs twice a day. Nest boxes containing feces increase the chance of germs on and in the egg. Separate clean and dirty eggs and throw away eggs with cracks or covered in feces.



Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling eggs or use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water aren't available.



Sanitize all equipment after cleaning your eggs

Use a fresh sanitizing solution each time you clean equipment, such as 5 teaspoons of regular-strength household bleach for every 2 litres of water. Allow equipment to air dry completely.



Refrigerate eggs after you clean them

Storing eggs pointy side down may keep them fresh for longer. Eggs can be stored in the fridge for 3 to 4 weeks.



If you choose to wash eggs with water, use:

1. **Clean water** that is safe to drink. Use egg-washing detergent according to the manufacturer's instructions, if needed.
2. **Water that is warmer than the egg, but not too hot.** Bring eggs to room temperature and clean with warm water. Don't use cold water because it can pull germs into the egg through the pores of the shell.
3. **Running water, never soak eggs.** Dry the eggs quickly and thoroughly after cleaning with a clean cloth or paper towel.

