Maryland
Department of Agriculture
*FOOD QUALITY ASSURANCE*
**50 Harry S Truman Parkway**
**Annapolis MD 21401**
**Telephone 410-841-5769**
**Fax 410-841-2750**



# Egg Safety for Small Producers

## On the Farm:

1. Use chicks from a certified source (National Poultry Improvement Plan *Salmonella enteritidis* monitored, *Salmonella pullorum* free) or contact MDA's Animal Health Section (410-841-5810) for testing.

2. Raise chickens isolated from all other poultry.

3. Use feed from a reliable source; crumbles or pellets are heat treated and less likely to be contaminated.

4. Use good sanitation practices:
   a. keep litter and nest boxes dry, change nest litter weekly,
   b. use potable water and keep water and drinkers clean,
   c. keep feed dry and feeders clean,
   d. control rodents , flies and beetles,
   e. keep wild birds, pets and predators away from the chicken pen,
   f. don't use unsanitized equipment from other farms,
   g. clean and sanitize all equipment and the coop between flocks.

5. Use pest control compounds and sanitizers in compliance with label instructions, and only if approved for use in poultry houses and around laying flocks.

6. Use only approved flock medications under veterinary supervision. Do not use eggs during the withdrawal period.

7. Maintain flock health and consult with a veterinarian on good health management practices.

8. Collect eggs at least twice daily.

## Egg handling after collection:

1. Use only clean eggs. Don't use floor eggs.

2. Lightly soiled eggs may be used for sale only if :
   a. eggs are either lightly sanded to remove small areas of dirt **or**
   b. eggs are carefully washed in **potable water 20$^{o}$F warmer than the egg temperature** and at least **90 $^{o}$F**, using only detergents* approved for egg washing.

3. Place eggs in suspended colander and wash **without submersing** them in the wash solution. Use a sanitizing rinse ** after washing. **Eggs must be dried** immediately afterwards. Sanded eggs must not be washed.

   *** bleach solution made of ½ oz of household bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) in 1 gallon of water may be used.*

4. Place eggs in clean, new cardboard boxes and store eggs **at or below 45 °F**.

5. Sell only eggs of **Grade A** quality or better.

6. Shelf life of eggs is 30-40 days from lay if handled this way and stored under refrigeration.

7. **Keep eggs refrigerated at all times**; use a cooler that plugs into a cigarette lighter or use refreezable cool packs for farmer markets, fairs etc. Don't use ice – eggs that sit in water can be contaminated with bacteria. Eggs should stay dry.

**Egg Safety tips for the consumer:**

1. Store eggs in the refrigerator on the shelf in the egg cartons.

2. Use only clean and unbroken eggs. Discard broken and dirty eggs. Eggs should **not** be washed before use.

3. Break eggs one at a time and avoid mixing the shell with the egg content. Remove bits of egg shell with a clean utensil.

4. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and hot water before beginning food preparation and use clean utensils, equipment and countertops.

5. Do not leave shell eggs and eggs in any form at room temperature for more than 2 hours including preparation and serving. Promptly after serving, refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers so they will cool quickly.

6. *Salmonella* and many other bacteria will not survive if held at a temperature of 140°F for 3 ½ minutes or instantly at 160 °F and they will not grow at a temperature below 40°F.