



Public Health Update

Salmonella Enteritidis

August 17, 2010

The Southern Nevada Health District has identified an increase in the number of *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) of a specific type in the community. *Salmonella* Enteritidis of this type is typically associated with eggs and poultry, however, other sources of infection – raw milk, meat and sprouts - have been identified in the past as potential sources. The health district has reported 30 cases of this type since January 2010, which is four times more than normally reported. The health district is collaborating with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service to investigate the nationwide increase in *Salmonella* Enteritidis.

Currently, the health district and the CDC advise that consumers can reduce their risk of infection by properly cooking and storing eggs, meat, poultry and other foods. Shell eggs are safest when stored in the refrigerator, thoroughly cooked and promptly consumed. Cooking reduces the number of bacteria present in an egg and a cooked egg with a runny yolk poses a greater risk than a completely cooked egg.

Specific actions to reduce the risk of *Salmonella* Enteritidis infection include:

- Keep eggs refrigerated at ≤ 45 F (≤ 7 C) at all times
- Discard cracked or dirty eggs
- Wash hands, cooking utensils and food preparation surfaces with soap and water after contact with raw eggs
- Cook eggs until both the white and yolk are firm
- Eggs should be consumed promptly after cooking
- Do not keep eggs warm or at room temperature for more than two hours
- Promptly refrigerate unused or leftover foods that contain eggs
- Do not eat raw eggs or undercooked eggs or foods containing the, such as raw cookie dough (especially by young children, the elderly or people with compromised immune systems)
- Avoid restaurant dishes made with eggs that are raw, undercooked or unpasteurized
- Restaurants should use pasteurized eggs in any recipe that calls for raw eggs, such as Hollandaise sauce or Caesar salad dressing

Anyone can become infected with egg-associated salmonellosis, but the illness can be more severe in elderly people, infants and young children, or anyone with a compromised immune system. Symptoms can begin 12 to 72 hours after consuming a contaminated food or beverage and include fever, abdominal cramps, and diarrhea. The illness usually lasts four to seven days and most people recover without antibiotic treatment; however, diarrhea can be severe and hospitalization can be necessary.