

## Epi Update for Friday, March 31, 2023

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)  
BUREAU OF HIV, STD, AND HEPATITIS

### IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report to include COVID-19 data starting April 7**
- **Egg safety**
- **Infographic: Egg safety - What you need to know**

#### **Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report to include COVID-19 data starting April 7**

Beginning April 1, Iowa HHS will no longer require positive COVID-19 test results be reported. As a result, the COVID-19 public dashboard will be removed on April 1, and COVID-19 surveillance data will be integrated into the next weekly *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report*, to be published on April 7th.

COVID-19 data in the *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report* will include similar measures to the current COVID-19 public dashboard, although the data source and level of detail may change. For example, the data will include the number of COVID-19 positive tests reported to Iowa HHS, but the source of this data will now be from a survey of Iowa clinical laboratories. This data will be aggregated by facility and will not include every positive test among Iowans, but will allow for tracking the percent of COVID-19 positive test results over time.

The *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report* will also feature COVID-19 indicators not currently available. Examples include COVID-19 related emergency department visits from syndromic surveillance data, COVID-19 hospitalizations from [healthdata.gov](https://healthdata.gov), and COVID-19 immunization data from the Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal.

The *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report* will include an overall COVID-19 activity level based on COVID-19 positive test percentage, hospitalization data, and death data compared to previous weeks and seasons. Iowa HHS will continue to review and revise content based on availability and usefulness of relevant data.

The *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report* is posted each week at [hhs.iowa.gov/influenza/reports](https://hhs.iowa.gov/influenza/reports).

If you would like to receive the *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report* via email, sign up at [public.govdelivery.com/accounts/IACIO/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=IACIO\\_2438](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/IACIO/subscriber/new?topic_id=IACIO_2438).

#### **Egg safety**

It's that time of year again when Iowans say goodbye to winter and celebrate spring holidays. Whether your celebration involves fresh eggs directly from backyard chickens or a farmer's market, or store bought eggs from the grocery store, keep the following in mind to help keep both yourself and others from getting sick:

- Fresh eggs contain a protective protein film around the eggshell known as the egg bloom or cuticle that keeps germs out. Don't wash fresh eggs with cold water because this can pull germs into the egg. Instead rub off any dirt on the shell with fine sandpaper, a brush, or a cloth. If fresh eggs need to be washed, the temperature of the water should be at least 20°F warmer than the egg.
- Inspect store bought or fresh eggs before purchasing or cooking. Throw away cracked eggs. Germs on the shell can more easily enter the egg through a cracked shell.
- Store eggs in their original carton in the refrigerator. Do not store eggs in the refrigerator door.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling eggs when cooking, cooling, dyeing, or hiding them.

- Cook eggs until both the yolk and the white are firm. Scrambled eggs should not be runny. Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to a minimum of 160°F.
- Hard-cooked eggs should not sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours or for more than 1 hour when temperatures are above 90° F. Keep them in the refrigerator until ready to serve.
- Hard-cooked eggs in their shells can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 1 week after cooking.
- Leftover cooked egg dishes (including egg salad) should be refrigerated and used within 3 to 4 days after cooking.

For more information about cleaning and disinfecting farm fresh eggs, visit [www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Assets/tipsheet-cd-eggs.pdf](http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Assets/tipsheet-cd-eggs.pdf).

For more information about *Salmonella* and eggs, visit [www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/communication/salmonella-and-eggs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/communication/salmonella-and-eggs.html).

### Infographic: Egg safety - What you need to know

**FOOD FACTS** FDA U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

#### Egg Safety: What You Need to Know

Fresh eggs, even those with clean, uncracked shells, may contain bacteria called *Salmonella* that can cause foodborne illness, often called "food poisoning." FDA has put regulations in place to help prevent contamination of eggs on the farm and during shipping and storage, but consumers also play a key role in preventing illness linked to eggs. Protect yourself and your family by following these safe handling tips when buying, storing, preparing, and serving eggs or foods that contain them.

**What is Salmonella?**

*Salmonella*, the name of a group of bacteria, is a common cause of food poisoning in the United States. Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, and vomiting 12 to 72 hours after infection. Symptoms usually last 4 to 7 days and most people get better without treatment. However, in some people, the diarrhea may be so severe that they need to be hospitalized. In these patients, the *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the blood stream, and then to other body sites and can cause death unless the person is treated quickly with antibiotics. Certain people are at greater risk for severe illness and include children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems (such as transplant patients and individuals with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and diabetes).

FDA requires all cartons of shell eggs that have not been treated to destroy *Salmonella* to carry the following safe handling statement:

**SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS**  
To prevent illness from bacteria: **keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.**

Eggs that have been treated to destroy *Salmonella*—by in-shell pasteurization, for example—are not required to carry safe handling instructions, but the labeling will usually say that they have been treated.

Protect yourself and your family by following these safe handling tips when buying, storing, preparing, and serving eggs or foods that contain them.

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**Have a healthy and happy week!**

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