# EGG SAFETY TIPS FROM THE FDA

## 1. How to Buy and Keep Eggs Clean

When buying eggs

- Always choose eggs that are clean with uncracked shells;

Dirty eggs can be a health hazard if they are not handled correctly. An eggshell contains approximately 7,500 pores or openings-meaning, whatever the eggshell comes into contact with can cross over this semi-permeable membrane and end up in your scrambled eggs. Dirty eggs can therefore carry harmful bacteria such as salmonella that can enter the eggs and if not cooked properly they can potentially cause food poisoning.

- Dirty eggs must be cleaned;

So that visible faecal matter, soil and other matter is removed from the shell.

**The Different Degrees of Dirty/Soiled Eggs and How to Clean Them**

### a) Dry Cleaning

A slightly dirty egg can be brushed or rubbed with a, loofa, paper towel and plastic scourer with a gentle rubbing motion. Eggs with visible faeces, soil or other matter that cannot be removed by dry cleaning should be segregated from clean intact eggs.

### b) Cleaning with Damp Cloth

If dirty eggs are to be cleaned with damp cloth, certain precautions must be taken:

- The water used to dampen the cloth should be sanitized and frequently changed
- Detergents and sanitizers used must be suitable for contact with food and used according to the manufacturer's specifications
- Damp cloth should be rinsed adequately in sanitized water and squeezed thoroughly so it is not dripping before being used.
- When damp cloth is passed over the egg, it should not leave water droplets on the egg surface, only a thin layer of moisture that can readily evaporate should be visible on the egg surface.
- There should be an adequate supply of damp cloth available and changed frequently with any visible sign of soiling
- Any brushes, cloths, loofas, etc. used in cleaning should be sanitized after use.

### c) Washing/ Wet Cleaning

If dirty eggs are to be washed (wet cleaning), certain precautions must be taken:

Eggs have a natural protective cuticle/barrier that comes from the mother hen that lays the egg. As the eggs are washed this protective cuticle may be compromised, thereby allowing microorganisms to enter through the pores of the shell. Therefore gentle washing methods that will not compromise the cuticle must be used.

Generally, washing should be carried out under carefully controlled conditions so as to minimize damage to the shell and prevent contamination of the egg contents.

- The washing process should be continuous so that eggs are not allowed to stand or soak in the wash water.
- Wash water should be warm, (about 41-44°C)
- If using egg washing chemical or sanitiser (e.g. Eggcellent) the pH should be greater than 10.5 to minimise the potential for contamination to occur.

Eggs should be dried after washing. If egg shells are left wet the risk of microorganisms entering the egg is increased. Moisture on the surface of the egg shell can also lead to mould growth during storage.

## 2. HOW TO STORE EGGS

As eggs are perishable products, temperature fluctuation and humidity are critical to its safety. With the concern about salmonella contamination, in the event that an egg is infected with salmonella, the bacteria will multiply more quickly if the egg is stored at room temperature than if it's stored in the refrigerator. This is why it is recommended that you keep your eggs in the fridge to minimize microbial growth.

- After eggs are refrigerated, they need to stay that way. A cold egg left out at room temperature can sweat, facilitating the movement of bacteria into the egg and increasing the growth of bacteria. Refrigerated eggs should not be left out more than 2 hours

- If cracked eggs may be used in egg products, this should be processed with minimum delay.

- Eggs that are fresh, clean and have an intact cuticle may not be refrigerated, as long as you are going to consume/use them within a relatively short period of time e.g. within 7days.

***ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT, AND SO LET'S MAKE FOOD SAFETY OUR LIFESTYLE AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY***.