



SAFELY ENJOY YOUR BACKYARD FLOCK

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The first day of spring is upon us along with the holiday celebration of new life and high expectations of a new growing season.

You can see the activity in local retail stores, shops and garden centers, in magazines, and in online websites selling seeds, garden supplies, holiday decorations, and other warm weather items in anticipation of the new spring season.

It is also the time of year that the Bureau of Regulatory Services at the Connecticut Department of Agriculture receives the greatest number of import permit requests from poultry owners, dealers, and hatcheries for the movement of hatching eggs and live day-old poultry—many of which going to people with small hobby or backyard flocks.

Looking at the poultry imports over the past several years revealed a growing trend for individuals to own backyard poultry in Connecticut. A similar trend was found nationally in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) survey.

This popular trend may be contributing to an ongoing increase in *Salmonella* outbreaks linked to backyard flocks. In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and multiple state agencies investigated 10 separate multi-state outbreaks of *Salmonella* infections in people who had contact with live poultry from backyard flocks.

The investigation found 1,120 people in 48 states and the District of Columbia were reported infected with *Salmonella*. One person died and 249 people were hospitalized. This is the largest number of human illnesses linked to contact with backyard poultry ever recorded by CDC.

Here are steps you can take to protect yourself and others while enjoying your backyard flock.

- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in their environment or handling clothes and shoes that had contact with live poultry. Adults should supervise hand washing of children.
- Do not let live poultry inside the house, in bathrooms, or especially in areas where food or drink is prepared, served or stored, such as kitchens or outdoor patios.
- Set aside a pair of shoes to wear while taking care of the poultry and keep those shoes outside of the house.
- Do not let children younger than 5 years old handle or touch chicks, ducklings or other live poultry without adult supervision.
- Do not snuggle or kiss birds, touch your mouth or eat or drink around live poultry.
- Clean outdoors any equipment or materials used to raise or care for live poultry, i.e. cages, feed or water containers.
- Buy baby poultry from hatcheries that participate in the USDA National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) U.S. *Salmonella* Monitoring Program. NPIP participation helps reduce the incidence of *Salmonella* in baby poultry in the hatchery, which helps prevent the spread of infection among poultry and people.

CDC Safe Handling Tips for Eggs from Backyard Poultry

Shell eggs may become contaminated with *Salmonella* through the laying process, once the eggs are laid, through poultry feed or bedding.

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To keep your family healthy, follow the tips below when collecting and handling eggs from a backyard flock:

- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling eggs, chickens, or anything in their environment.
- Maintain a clean coop. Cleaning the coop, floor, nests and perches on a regular basis will help to keep eggs clean.
- Collect eggs often. Eggs that spend a significant amount of time in the nest can become dirty or break. Cracked eggs should be thrown away.
- Eggs with dirt and debris can be cleaned with fine sandpaper, a brush or cloth. Don't wash eggs, because colder water can pull bacteria into the egg.
- Refrigerate eggs after collection.
- Cook eggs thoroughly. Raw and undercooked eggs contain *Salmonella* bacteria that can make you sick.
- Know the regulations regarding the sale of eggs to the public.

After you touch ducklings or chicks, wash your hands so you don't get sick!



- Contact with live poultry (chicks, chickens, ducklings, ducks, geese, and turkeys) can be a source of human *Salmonella* infections.
- *Salmonella* germs can cause a diarrheal illness in people that can be mild, severe, or even life threatening.
- Chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry can carry *Salmonella* germs and still appear healthy and clean.
- *Salmonella* germs are shed in their droppings and can easily contaminate their bodies and anything in areas where birds live and roam.

To learn more about *Salmonella* and eggs visit the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/features/salmonellaeggs/index.html>

