

# Veterinary Connections



News about Animal Health, Food Safety, and One Health.  
Army Public Health Center

2016

SPRING EDITION

## Pet Food, Salmonella, and You

While pets provide many health benefits to you and your family, their pet food and treats may become contaminated with food-borne bacteria like *Salmonella* that can make both your pet and YOU sick. *Salmonella* can cause mild to severe and even life threatening illness with symptoms that include diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. Those at greater risk for severe illness include children under 5 years old, people 65 years and older, and individuals with weakened immune systems. You can prevent *Salmonella* illness by shopping wisely, using proper storage and handling, and including good hand-washing as part of your routine.

There are many different pet foods and treats to choose from these days. Dry, canned, pouches, fresh cooked, frozen, and raw food options abound. Both the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) discourage feeding pets raw or under-cooked meat and egg diets due to the risk of food-borne illness to pets and their people.

>> CONT. ON PAGE TWO

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## Pet Food, *Salmonella*, and You

>> CONT. FROM PAGE ONE

When buying food and treats for your pets, check the package to make sure there are no rips, tears, holes, or discolorations. Don't buy dented canned food as the dent may have affected the seams in the can. Make sure to check for the "Best By" date or "Use By" date on the package or can.

If possible, store pet food and treats in a separate area from where you store human food. Dry food and treats should be stored in a cool, dry place, under 80 degrees F, in the original bag, folded over, preferably inside a dedicated plastic container with a lid. This will help keep it from getting stale and importantly, keep small children from getting into it. Be sure to promptly refrigerate leftover wet pet food, such as food in cans and pouches.

When it is feeding time, try to feed your pet outside of the kitchen area. Keep small children 5 years old and younger away from pet feeding areas so that they don't put pet food or pet food contaminated fingers into their mouths. It is also wise for children to be away from pets while they are eating to avoid the risk of bites. Be sure everyone who has been in contact with the pet food and treats washes their hands directly afterwards. When washing pet bowls and water dishes, avoid using the kitchen sink or bathtub.



Clean up continues with proper disposal of pet waste, which should be put in a sealed plastic bag and thrown away in the outside garbage. Always wash your hands right away!

Remember, to help keep ALL of your family members, human and animal, safe from *Salmonella* and other pet food or treat food-borne diseases, shop wisely, store appropriately, handle safely, clean up promptly, and always wash hands when finished.

For more information:

*Salmonella* and dry pet food -  
<http://www.cdc.gov/features/salmonelladrypetfood/>

When and how to wash your hands -  
<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>



## Could your diet kill your dog?

Xylitol is a sugar substitute commonly used in sugarless gum, children's chewable multi-vitamins, oral care products, and a variety of nut butters (such as peanut butter, sunflower butter; check the brand ingredients before feeding to pets). It is also used in many dietary baked goods and candies. Xylitol-containing products are recommended for diabetics and those following low-carbohydrate diets. However, xylitol is extremely dangerous to your dog. If you see "naturally sweetened" or "natural sweetener" promoted on the product, check the ingredients for "xylitol" or its chemical classification, "sugar alcohol."

The effects of xylitol in your dog can be seen within 30 minutes of ingestion and can be very severe. In some cases xylitol has resulted in acute liver failure. Only a couple of sticks of xylitol gum can be toxic to a 20-pound dog.

For additional information please visit:

<https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/061001b.aspx>

<https://www.aspc.org/>

<http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/NewsEvents/CVMUpdates/ucm244076.htm>

Always keep fresh eggs under refrigeration at 40°F/4.4°C and below until the eggs are ready for boiling. Ensure the eggs are "hard boiled."

## Breaking News: The Easter Bunny supports egg safety!



When dyeing eggs, a good rule of thumb is to keep the process under two hours after boiling and place the eggs back in refrigeration.

**As the new spring season approaches, families around the world celebrate the Easter holiday with the tradition of egg dyeing and egg hunts.**

In the excitement that holiday traditions bring into the home, it is very easy to overlook the basics of egg safety, increasing the risk of consuming eggs that are contaminated with *Salmonella enteritidis* (SE). According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety (USDA) Inspection Service, bacteria can be on the outside of an egg shell. That's because the egg exits the hen's body through the same passageway as feces are excreted. It is also possible for eggs to become infected by SE-fecal contamination through the pores of the shell after the egg is laid. SE can be inside an uncracked, whole egg, too. Contamination of eggs may be due to bacteria within the hen's reproductive tract before the shell forms around the yolk and white. This is why it is important to handle fresh eggs very carefully and ensure proper cooking and temperature control.

Keep fresh eggs under refrigeration at 40° fahrenheit /4.4° celsius and below until the eggs are ready for boiling. Ensure the eggs are "hard

boiled." When dyeing eggs, a good rule of thumb is to keep the process under 2 hours after boiling and place the eggs back in refrigeration. If boiled and dyed eggs are used for display and egg hunts, keep the time out of refrigeration to not more than 2 hours. After an egg hunt, wash and sanitize the outside of the egg to remove contamination that could be present from soil and contact with unclean hands and pets. Consumers should consider plastic egg shells with prizes as an alternative to boiled eggs for egg hunts.

For additional consumer information on egg safety, visit the USDA – Food Safety Inspection Service website.

Product safety fact sheets are available for download: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/egg-products-preparation/shell-eggs-from-farm-to-table/ct\\_index](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/egg-products-preparation/shell-eggs-from-farm-to-table/ct_index)

# Farmers Market Food Safety

It is the exciting time of year when farmers begin to plan the spring harvest to produce fresh fruits, vegetables and other food products for community Farmers Markets.



We learn from an early age that fresh food contains more natural nutrients and can support a healthy lifestyle through inclusion into daily diets. Unlike the majority of grocery store foods, Farmers Markets avail a variety of freshly harvested, often the same day, fruits and vegetables, dairy, and other farm-fresh products. The first thing to remember is fresh food does not mean safe food. Farm-fresh products are not always handled and processed the same way as bulk grocery store products, to include washing and

sanitizing. Therefore, prepare and keep the following tips in mind as you make your "fresh decisions":

- Head to the Farmers Markets early to avoid produce that has been sitting out all day long.
- Buy loose produce rather than packaged; you will have more control over what you select.
- Bag fresh produce separately from meat, poultry, and seafood products.

- Be sure to ask whether fresh juice has been pasteurized or processed to kill bacteria.
- Buy only refrigerated eggs.
- Refrigerate foods promptly.
- Always look for the Safe Food Handling label on meat packages.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water just before eating.

For additional information on Farmers Market food safety, visit the USDA website and download the DOD Farmers Market Guide:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/USDA%20Farmers%20Markets%20on%20Military%20Installations.pdf>.

You can also visit the Army Public Health Center (Provisional) website and download food safety brochures specifically published for consumers: <https://usaphcapps.amedd.army.mil/HIOShoppingCart/searchResults.aspx?c=0&s=0&f=0&l=0&t=farmers>

Approved for public release, distribution unlimited. TA-349-0316 APHC Veterinary Services

## Veterinary Connections



Goal of publication:

- Veterinary Connections is a quarterly publication written by Army Veterinary Services personnel and published by the Army Public Health Center (Provisional) to inform and educate Service members, beneficiaries, and retirees about Animal Health, Food Safety, and One Health.
- One Health refers to the intersection and overlap between animals, humans, and the environment.
- Army Veterinary Services personnel serve around the world supporting the Department of Defense as proponents for Animal Health and Food Protection.

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Locate your local Veterinary Treatment Facility at <https://tiny.army.mil/r/JG66r/VTFs>



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