

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State health officials offer safety tips when handling live poultry

Raising backyard poultry has become increasingly popular in Montana and many feed stores across the state offer chicks for sale.

State health officials say that raising chicks can be a rewarding and fun experience, but they are reminding Montanans to keep safe handling practices in mind when handling live poultry in order to limit disease risk.

“Even healthy animals can carry organisms that make people sick,” said Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) epidemiologist Dana Fejes. In 2015, 10 percent of Montanans who became ill with Salmonella had contact to live poultry. Young children and persons with weakened immune systems are at greatest risk for infection.

For that reason, DPHHS and the Department of Livestock (DOL) are sending educational materials to feed stores so Montanans can learn how to care for live poultry safely. “Look for trivia questions on soap bars at your local store,” Fejes said.

DOL Assistant State Veterinarian Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said: “Next time you care for your backyard flock, please remember the following simple prevention measures to keep your families healthy and enjoy the benefits of raising animals.”

- Wash your hands after handling animals,
- Avoid touching your mouth after animal contact,
- Don’t eat or drink around animals,
- Don’t bring poultry into the house, and
- Supervise small children around animals.

“Together we can prevent illnesses and keep our children and communities healthy,” Fejes stressed. Please visit www.dphhs.mt.gov for guidance and more information.

KNOW THE RISKS ENJOY THE BENEFITS



Wash
hands after
contact with
poultry!



POULTRY

Risk of Salmonella or Campylobacter infection is 5 times greater for those who have contact to live poultry in Montana.



BACKYARD

84% of poultry exposures occur at home and only 13% reported recently acquiring a new animal.



EGGS

25% of Salmonella submitted to the state laboratory were serotype Enteritidis, commonly linked to eggs and poultry.