

MILLS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

PO Box 209, 101 Central St., Ste B11, Glenwood, IA 51534 (712) 527-9699 (712) 527-4711 www.mcph.millscoia.us



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

NEWS RELEASE

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Sheri Bowen, Agency Adm. – 527-0137

Safe handling tips for baby chicks!

During the Easter season baby chicks are sometimes given as gifts, and during spring months some stores have live birds on display for handling by the public. Live poultry may have *Salmonella* bacteria on their bodies and in their droppings, even when they appear healthy and clean. The bacteria can also get on cages, coops, and wherever birds walk around. It is important to wash your hands with soap and water after handling poultry or coming in contact with areas where birds have been, especially before touching food or your mouth.

“Children are especially at risk for illness because their immune systems are still developing and because they are more likely than others to put their fingers or other items into their mouth”, said Lorri Greiner, R.N., Maternal/Child Health Nurse at Mills Co. Public Health. “Families are encouraged to enjoy this spring season and its cuddly creatures, but remember to protect themselves against the risk they pose.”

The following recommendations are important to maintain your health during this spring season.

- ? Do not let children less than 5 years of age touch birds.
- ? Always wash your hands with soap and water immediately after touching poultry. Use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Adults should supervise hand washing in young children.
- ? Do not eat or drink around birds or around their living areas.
- ? Do not let birds inside the house or in areas where food or drink is prepared or served, such as in kitchens or on outdoor patios.
- ? When cleaning bird cages and related items, do so outside of your home; do not clean them in the kitchen sink or bathtub.

People infected with *Salmonella* may have mild or severe diarrhea, fever, and sometimes vomiting. These symptoms usually occur within 12-36 hours after infection. For more information about *Salmonella*, please contact Lorri Greiner at Mills Co. Public Health, 527-9699 or check out our website at www.mcph.millscoia.us for *Salmonella* Fact Sheets. Remember the 3 C's – Clean your Hands, Cover your Cough and Contain Your Germs (Stay Home When You Are ILL). Good advice no matter what the season.