Salmonella food poisoning is the most common cause of foodborne infection that provokes diarrhea in Brazil and food preparation using contaminated eggs is associated with this occurrence. To evaluate practices adopted by consumers concerning egg purchase, storage, handling, and preparation a questionnaire survey was conducted, from March to June 2009, in Sorocaba, a municipality in the state of São Paulo, among parents (n = 664) of students attending public and private preschools. Among the participants, 77.0% stated that they buy eggs in supermarkets and 81.0% reported that the product was not stored under refrigeration at the points of sale. The expiry date was the most relevant criterion for the decision of purchase, mentioned by 69.4% of the participants; 79.5% of the respondents discard cracked or broken eggs, 65.1% of them store eggs in the molded egg rack of the refrigerator door, and 43.5% do not wash eggs before usage. From the preparation methods considered inadequate, we identified the largest consumption to be of eggs cooked over easy (44.5% of quotation), followed by soufflés, mousses and cakes with topping prepared with raw eggs (20.8%). Still, 27.3% related the risk of contamination and hygienic conditions during food preparation. Adequate practices must be adopted during the purchase, storage, handling and preparation of eggs at home in order to decrease the risk of infection by Salmonella and is necessary educational programs in order to ensure that good and safe practices will be adopted by population.

Keywords: Salmonella; Eggs; Good practices; Consumption