

Facts on Eggs

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During special occasions such as Easter and Passover, eggs take on special meaning and are often prepared and served. While eggs are used all year around, its important that they be handled carefully especially when they maybe used in activities or as part of decoration.

Like all perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, seafood and produce, eggs need to be handled properly to prevent foodborne illness. Occasionally eggs can become contaminated with bacteria. That's why it is important to cook eggs thoroughly and store them safely. ***Here are some basic food safety tips to follow when handling any perishable food:***

1. Before you begin preparing any holiday dishes, remember to clean your hands by washing them in hot soapy water for 20 seconds or longer. Always wash them before and after food preparation when handling raw foods.
2. Beware of cross-contamination. Avoid placing cooked foods on surfaces that had raw items on it.
3. Cool foods safely by refrigerating cooked foods within 2 hours. Always refrigerate raw eggs in their original cardboard container.
4. Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm.
5. Avoid licking or tasting batters or other food made with raw eggs.

For Easter Egg Hunts, follow these tips:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before handling the eggs.
- Only use eggs that have been refrigerated and are free of cracks and dirt.
- Cook eggs in a single layer with at least one-inch of water covering the eggs. Cover the pan, bring to a boil and then remove the pan from the heat. Let the eggs stand for about 15-18 minutes and then immediately run them under cold water. Place the eggs in a single layer uncovered in the refrigerator to cool completely.
- To decorate, use food grade dyes and then refrigerate until ready to use. You can also use natural food dyes such as: fresh beets for pale red, yellow onion skins for orange, orange or lemon peels for light yellow, spinach leaves for pale green, yellow delicious apple peels for green gold, red cabbage leaves for blue and strong brewed coffee for beige to brown.
- If it is your tradition to hide the eggs outdoors. Make one set for the outdoors and discard after the hunt. Replace those eggs with another set of decorated eggs you kept safely in the refrigerator for consumption. You may want to mark the eggs so that you do not confuse the contaminated eggs with the ones you stored safely in the refrigerator for consumption.

Handle perishable foods safely to safe guard your families' health and well being throughout the year.