

Food Safety for Families

Egg Food Safety

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Dear Parents,

If you're planning an Easter egg hunt or cooking eggs for your Passover Seder, keep your family safe from foodborne illness. Hard-cooked eggs for Easter and Passover celebrations should be prepared with care.

For a Safe Easter Egg Hunt

If you plan to eat the Easter eggs you decorate, be sure to use only food grade dye. Some people make two sets of eggs - one for decorating and hiding, another for eating. Others use plastic eggs for hiding.

For an Easter egg hunt, avoid cracking the egg shells. If the shells crack then bacteria could enter and contaminate the egg inside. Also, hide eggs in places that are protected from dirt, pets and other bacteria sources and keep hard-cooked eggs chilled in the refrigerator until just before the hunt.

Limit the time for hiding and hunting eggs to no more than two hours. Then be sure to refrigerate the "found" eggs right away until you eat them. **Eggs found hours later or the next day should be thrown out—not eaten!**



For a Safe Seder Passover Celebration

Eggs also play an important role on the Seder plate during Passover celebrations. If eggs sit out at room temperatures for more than two hours, they should not be eaten. Since the hard-cooked eggs that are served to each person as part of the special dinner are meant to be eaten, keep hard-cooked eggs in the refrigerator until ready to serve.



Boiling Eggs

When eggs are hard-cooked, the protective coating is washed away, leaving open pores in the shell where harmful bacteria could enter. Be sure to refrigerate eggs within two hours of cooking and use them within a week. For proper cooling, check your temperature with a refrigerator thermometer and adjust the temperature to **40°F** or below.

Directions:

Place eggs in saucepan large enough to hold them in single layer. **Add** cold water to cover eggs by an inch. **Heat** over high heat **just** to boiling. **Remove** from burner. **Cover** pan. Let eggs **STAND** in hot water for 15 minutes for **large** eggs (12 minutes for medium eggs; 18 minutes for extra large). **Drain** immediately and serve warm, **OR** cool completely under cold running water, then **REFRIGERATE** and use within one week.

(Source: American Egg Board)

The greenish ring is **harmless**. It forms when eggs are boiled too long or at too high a temperature.

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Bacteria (germs), viruses and parasites are everywhere in the environment! They are organisms that you cannot see, smell, or taste. In fact, they can contaminate food and cause life-threatening illness. Foodborne illness (food poisoning) can strike anyone, especially young children, pregnant women (it endangers their unborn babies too), older adults, and persons with weakened immune systems.

Salmonella can be on the outside of a shell egg. Eggs are washed and sanitized at the processing plant to reduce bacteria. *Salmonella* can also be inside an uncracked, whole egg. Egg yolks contaminated with *Salmonella* may happen in the chicken before the shell forms around the yolk and white.

To Stay Healthy and Avoid Foodborne Illness:

- ▶ Always buy eggs from a refrigerated case. Choose eggs with clean, uncracked shells.
- ▶ Buy eggs before the “Sell-By” or “EXP” (expiration) date on the carton.
- ▶ Take eggs straight home from the grocery store and refrigerate them right away. Check to be sure your refrigerator is set at 40°F or below. Don’t take eggs out of the carton when storing them in the refrigerator — the carton protects them. Keep your eggs in the coldest part of the refrigerator — not in the door shelves.
- ▶ Fresh shell eggs can be stored in their carton in the refrigerator for 4 to 5 weeks after the “sell-by” date.
- ▶ Always wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after handling raw eggs. To avoid cross-contamination, you should also wash forks, knives, spoons, and all counters and other surfaces that touch the raw eggs with hot water and soap.
- ▶ Don’t keep raw or cooked eggs out of the refrigerator more than two hours.



Here Are Some Safety Tips for Easter Eggs:

- ◆ **Dyeing eggs:** After hard cooking eggs, dye them and return them to the refrigerator within two hours. If eggs are to be eaten, use a food grade dye. As with all foods, persons dyeing the eggs should wash their hands before handling the eggs.
- ◆ **Decorations:** One Easter bread recipe is decorated with dyed, cooked eggs in the braided bread. After baking, serve within two hours or refrigerate and use within three to four days.
- ◆ **Blowing out eggshells:** Because some raw eggs may contain *Salmonella*, you must use caution when blowing out the contents to hollow out the shell for decorating. Use only eggs that have been kept refrigerated and are uncracked. To destroy bacteria that may be present on the surface of the egg, wash the egg in hot water and rinse in a solution of one teaspoon liquid chlorine bleach per half cup of water. After blowing out the egg, refrigerate the contents in a covered container and use within two to four days.