



FOOD SAFETY UPDATE

Making Eggs Safe

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Sources:
[www.fs.is.usda.gov/oa/pubs/
consumerpubs.htm](http://www.fs.is.usda.gov/oa/pubs/consumerpubs.htm)

Spring is here! And there are many activities and foods that include eggs. Here are some tips to safely take part in Spring activities such as dyeing eggs and egg hunts. Follow these tips to ensure a fun and safe celebration.

Dyeing eggs: After hard cooking eggs, dye them and return them to the refrigerator within 2 hours. If eggs are to be eaten, use a food-safe coloring. As with all foods, persons dyeing the eggs should wash their hands before handling the eggs.

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

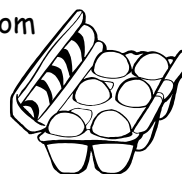
may be present on the surface of the egg, wash the egg in hot water and then rinse in a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach per half cup of water. After blowing out the egg, refrigerate the contents and use within 2 to 4 days; cook thoroughly before eating.

Hunting eggs: Hard-cooked eggs for an egg hunt must be prepared with care to prevent cracking the shells. If the shells crack, bacteria could contaminate the inside. Eggs should be hidden in places that are protected from dirt, pets, and other sources of bacteria. The total time for hiding and hunting eggs should not exceed 2 hours. The "found" eggs must be re-refrigerated until eaten.



Points to Consider When Buying Eggs

- Always purchase eggs from a refrigerated case.
- Choose eggs with clean, uncracked shells.
- Don't buy out-of-date eggs.
- Look for the USDA grade shield or mark. Graded eggs must meet standards for quality and size.
- Always purchase eggs before the "Sell-By" or "EXP" date on the carton. After the eggs reach



- home, they may be refrigerated 3 to 5 weeks from the day they are placed in the refrigerator.
- Take eggs straight home and store them immediately in the refrigerator set at 40 F or below. Keep them in their carton and place them in the coldest part of the refrigerator, not the door.

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Handling Eggs Safely

Proper refrigeration, cooking, and handling should prevent most egg-safety problems. Persons can enjoy eggs and dishes containing eggs, if these safe handling guidelines are followed.

- Wash hands, utensils, equipment, and work areas with hot, soapy water before and after contact with eggs.
- Don't keep eggs out of the refrigerator more than 2 hours.
- Raw eggs and other ingredients, combined according to recipe directions, should be cooked immediately or refrigerated and cooked within 24 hours.

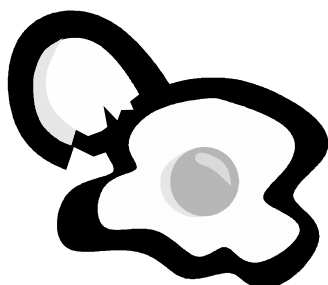
- Serve cooked eggs and dishes containing eggs immediately after cooking, or place in shallow containers for quick cooling and refrigerate at once for later use. Use within 3 to 4 days.



More Egg Facts

- **Do not wash eggs.** When the egg is laid, a protective coating is put on the outside by the hen. At the plant, government regulations require that USDA-graded eggs be carefully washed and sanitized using special detergent. Then the egg is coated with a tasteless, natural mineral oil to protect it.

- **Never purchase cracked eggs.** Bacteria can enter eggs through cracks in the shell. If eggs crack on the way home from the store, break them into a clean container, cover it tightly, keep refrigerated, and use within 2 days. If eggs



crack during hard cooking, they are safe.

- **How Does Salmonella Infect Eggs?** Because the egg exits the hen's body through the same passageway as feces, bacteria can be on the outside of an egg shell. Even though eggs are washed and sanitized at the processing plant, bacteria can still be inside an uncracked, whole egg. Contamination of eggs may be due to bacteria within the hen's ovary or oviduct before the shell forms around the yolk and white. It is also possible for eggs to become infected by Salmonella Enteritidis. This is fecal bacteria that can get through the pores of the shells after they are laid.


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EGG STORAGE CHART

PRODUCT	REFRIGERATOR	FREEZER
Raw eggs in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze.
Raw egg whites	2 to 4 days	12 months
Raw egg yolks	2 to 4 days	Yolks do not freeze well.
Raw egg accidentally frozen in shell	Use immediately after thawing.	Keep frozen; then refrigerate to thaw.
Hard-cooked eggs	1 week	Do not freeze.
Egg substitutes, liquid		
Unopened	10 days	Do not freeze.
Opened	3 days	Do not freeze.
Egg substitutes, frozen		
Unopened	After thawing, 7 days, or refer to "Use-By" date on carton.	12 months
Opened	After thawing, 3 days, or refer to "Use-By" date on carton.	Do not freeze.
Casseroles made with eggs	3 to 4 days	After baking, 2 to 3 months.
Eggnog		
Commercial	3 to 5 days	6 months
Homemade	2 to 4 days	Do not freeze.
Pies		
Pumpkin or pecan	3 to 4 days	After baking, 1 to 2 months.
Custard and chiffon	3 to 4 days	Do not freeze.
Quiche with any kind of filling	3 to 4 days	After baking, 1 to 2 months.