News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 3/27/2013

Keep Your Easter Eggs Safe

This week many eggs will be hard-cooked and dyed for use in Easter baskets and egg hunts.

Hard-cooked eggs are easy to prepare and easy to keep safe.
1. Place eggs in a saucepan and fill with cold water to one inch above eggs.
2. Cover the pan and quickly bring the water to a boil.
3. Turn off the heat, remove the pan from the burner, and allow the eggs to stand (covered) for 12 minutes for medium-size eggs; 15 minutes for large eggs; 18 minutes for extra large eggs and 21 minutes for jumbo eggs.
4. Run cold water over the eggs or place them in ice water to cool. This step prevents the yolks from turning green. (The green color occurs when eggs have been cooked for too long or at too high a temperature).
5. When eggs have cooled, refrigerate promptly. Hard boiled eggs are easiest to peel right after cooling. Cooling causes the egg to contract slightly in the shell.

When stored in their shell, hard-cooked eggs can be refrigerated for up to one week. Refrigerate in their original carton to prevent odor absorption. Once peeled, eggs should be eaten that day.

Very fresh eggs can be difficult to peel. To ensure easily peeled eggs, buy and refrigerate them a week to 10 days in advance of cooking. This brief "breather" allows the eggs time to take in air, which helps separate the membranes from the shell.
The eggs that have been dyed and used as decorations are likely to end up on the dinner table so heed the recommendations from The Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (www.fsis.usda.gov) to prevent foodborne illness:

- Wash hands before handling eggs at every step in preparation – including cooking, cooling, dyeing and hiding.
- Only use eggs that have been refrigerated; discard eggs that are cracked or dirty.
- Hard cook eggs before dyeing for the egg hunt.
- Keep hard-cooked eggs refrigerated until just before the hunt.
- FSIS/USDA suggests having one set of eggs for decorating only and another set for eating.
- If you are hiding eggs outside, hide them in places that are protected from dirt, pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects, lawn chemicals and other potential sources of bacteria. To prevent bacterial growth, don’t let eggs sit in hiding places for more than two hours. After the hunt, discard any eggs that were cracked, dirty or that children didn’t find within two hours.
- Lastly, don’t forget to place the eggs back in the refrigerator until it’s time to eat! The "found" eggs must be washed, re-refrigerated and eaten within 7 days of cooking.
- When you are ready to eat the hard-cooked eggs simplify the peeling process by tapping the hard-cooked egg lightly on the counter, then roll it between your hands to loosen the shell.

When decorating eggs be sure to use food grade dyes. Handle eggs carefully to prevent cracking. Bacteria could enter the egg through cracks in the shell. Commercial egg dyes are plentiful during the spring holiday season and many common household ingredients also can be used as coloring agents. Visit www.incredibleegg.org/ for Easter egg dyeing tips, recipes, and food safety tips.

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