

K-State Research and Extension News for March 13, 2022

## **Easter Egg Safety**

*Submitted by Franny Eastwood, Extension Agent*

Hard-cooked eggs are an Easter tradition. Many families like to decorate them and even more, eat them!

To safely prepare your Easter eggs, purchase clean, unbroken eggs and keep them refrigerated until you are ready to cook them. The shells are the egg's first line of defense, so work with eggs carefully to prevent cracking. Eggs with cracked shells should not be decorated or eaten. Because raw eggs may have *Salmonella* or other bacteria, wash your hands with warm water and soap before handling eggs and at every step of egg preparation. This includes cooking, cooling, dyeing and even when hiding them for games.

Hard cooking eggs should kill *Salmonella* bacteria, but will not keep them from spoiling or getting re-contaminated. Refrigerate hard-cooked eggs before dyeing them and keep them refrigerated when you are not using them. Do not leave eggs out of the refrigerator for more than two hours.

To hard-cook eggs:

1. Place a single layer of eggs in a saucepan.
2. Add cold water to come at least 1 inch above the eggs.
3. Cover and bring the water to a boil; turn off the heat.
4. Let the eggs stand covered in the hot water for 15 minutes for large eggs, 12 minutes for medium, and 18 minutes for extra-large.
5. Immediately run cold water over the eggs; when they are cool, drain and refrigerate.

Decorate your eggs using food grade dyes. If you are going to have an Easter egg hunt, it is best to either use plastic eggs or decorated hollow eggs. If you want to hunt hard-cooked eggs, consider coloring one set of eggs for the egg hunt and another set for eating. Do not eat any hard-cooked eggs that have been left out of the refrigerator for more than two hours. A tip for reducing egg peeling frustration is to age eggs in the refrigerator for a week to 10 days prior to hard cooking.

Ideas for using colored eggs: Eat them plain, make deviled eggs, egg salad sandwiches, add to potato salad or pasta salad, use them in a tossed salad, add an egg to a sack lunch (be sure to keep the sack lunch cold until time to eat). According to the [USDA](#), hard-cooked eggs should be used within one week.

Eggs are a good source of protein and vitamin B, and contain many other nutrients including calcium and iron. This makes decorated eggs not only fun to make and pretty to look at, but also good for you!

Sources: "Got Easter Eggs?" Michigan State University Extension, "Safety of hard cooked eggs for dyeing." University of Minnesota Extension. For more information on nutrition, food safety, health, or family and child development contact the Marais des Cygnes Extension District, or write to [fmeastwo@ksu.edu](mailto:fmeastwo@ksu.edu) or check out our website: [www.maraisdescygnnes.k-state.edu](http://www.maraisdescygnnes.k-state.edu)