



County of Sacramento

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NEWS RELEASE

Make Sure Your Easter Egg Hunt is Fun and Safe

Remember the 2 hour rule to prevent foodborne illnesses

What would Easter be without decorated hard-boiled eggs? Many family traditions involve coloring, decorating, hiding, hunting and ultimately eating these symbols of spring. But all this extra handling provides opportunities for foodborne illness.

If you're preparing hard-boiled eggs to decorate this year, the Sacramento County Department of Environmental Management recommends a few egg safety tips to help keep you and your family healthy.

- Always buy eggs from a refrigerated case. Choose eggs with clean, uncracked shells.
- Take eggs straight home from the grocery store and refrigerate them right away. Check to be sure your refrigerator is set at 41°F or below. Keep the eggs in the coldest part of the refrigerator — not on the door.
- Don't take eggs out of the carton to put them in the refrigerator — the carton protects them. Raw shell eggs in the carton can stay in your refrigerator for 3 to 5 weeks from the purchase 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 eggs with hot water and soap.
- **Remember the 2 hour rule!** Don't keep raw or cooked eggs out of the refrigerator more than 2 hours. If you are doing an Easter egg hunt and eggs are found more than 2 hours after they were cooked or taken out of the refrigerator **DO NOT EAT THEM**. Harmful bacteria can grow in an egg when left out at room temperature.
- When you hard-boil eggs, this allows the eggs protective shell to become porous, creating an inlet for bacteria. When hiding eggs for an Easter hunt, make sure you hide the eggs away from dirt, pets and other sources of bacteria
- Egg dishes such as deviled eggs or egg salad should be used within 3 to 4 days.

For more information on egg preparation safety tips, visit the following websites:

- <http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm077342.htm>
- http://www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/Focus_On_Shell_Eggs/index.asp

Visit the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department website at www.emd.saccounty.net or call (916) 875-8484.

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