



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH County of Riverside







INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 50-06-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION



### EASTER EGG SAFETY

Spring time is the season for eggs! While eggs are used year round, they are especially important for many spring-time activities such as Easter and Passover, when traditional ‘egg hunts’ usually take place. Like all perishable foods, eggs need to be handled properly to prevent the transmission of food-borne illnesses. Bacteria, such as *Salmonella enteritidis*, can be transmitted via eggs, and possibly make someone sick.


#### Egg Safety before the hunt...

-  Wash your hands thoroughly *before* handling eggs and also in between each step of preparation, including cooking, cooling, and dyeing.
-  Only use eggs that have been refrigerated, are clean, and are un-cracked. Store all eggs in the refrigerator, below 45°F.
-  When cooking, place a single layer in the saucepan, add water to at least one inch above the eggs, cover the pan, bring to a boil, and then remove from the heat. Let the covered pot stand (18 minutes for extra large eggs, 15 minutes for large eggs, and 12 minutes for medium eggs) and then run cold water over the eggs. When the eggs are cool enough to handle, place them in an uncovered container in the refrigerator, where they can air dry.
-  When coloring the eggs, use only un-cracked eggs and food grade dye or food coloring. Dissolve the coloring or dye in water that is warmer than the eggs. This allows the eggs to expand and keeps them from pulling the dye solution through their pores, into the whites. If any eggs crack during this process, discard them, as the cracks can be entryways for bacteria.
-  Keep all hard-cooked eggs refrigerated below 45°F until just before the hunt.
-  Consider buying one set of eggs for the hunting, and another set of eggs for eating.

#### Egg Safety during the hunt...

-  Hide the eggs in places that are protected from dirt, pets, and other potential sources of bacteria.
-  To help prevent bacterial growth, do not let the eggs sit in hiding places for more than two hours. Any eggs that are found after the hunt, such as the next day, should be discarded.

#### Egg Safety after the hunt...

-  Refrigerate the eggs until it's time to eat, and discard any eggs that are visibly cracked.

\*Document available in an alternate format upon request