

## **EASTER EGG SAFETY**

There are some important safe handling methods to remember this time of year when you're decorating, cooking or hiding Easter eggs. Remember to:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with hot soapy water and rinse them before handling the eggs when cooking, cooling, dyeing, hiding, and eating them.
- Be sure and inspect the eggs before purchasing them, making sure they are not dirty or cracked. Handle carefully after purchase. Dangerous bacteria may enter a cracked egg.
- ***How to hard-cook eggs:*** Purchase and refrigerate eggs for Easter egg dying a few days before you plan to cook them. The American Egg Board (<http://www.incredibleegg.org/kids-and-family/holiday-and-special-occassions>) recommends putting the eggs in a single layer in a saucepan with at least 1 inch of water (for better dye coverage after cooking, also add a tablespoon of vinegar), place pan over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Cover pan when water comes to a boil. When the water has reached the boiling point, turn off the heat. If necessary, remove the pan from the heat to prevent further boiling. Let eggs stand, covered, for 15 minutes to 20 minutes depending on their size. When the time is up, drain and continually run cold water over the eggs or plunge them into ice water to stop the cooking and completely cool the eggs and refrigerate until needed.
- ***Decoration tips:*** If you plan on eating the eggs later, use food grade dyes such as commercial egg dyes, liquid food coloring or colored drink powders. Dye eggs in water warmer than the eggs so that they do not absorb the dye water. Eggs decorated using non-edible materials like glues, markers and paints may be displayed but not eaten. After decorating, return cooked eggs to refrigerator for storage.
- Dyed, hard-cooked eggs in undamaged shells may be kept for up to one week. If eggs are kept out of refrigeration for more than two to three hours, discard instead of eating.
- If you're having an Easter egg hunt, consider hiding places carefully. Avoid areas where the eggs might come into contact with pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects or lawn chemicals. Make sure you find all the eggs you've hidden and discard any that are cracked during the hunt or handling. Return cooked, hidden eggs to the refrigerator within at least two hours to prevent spoilage.