



**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR A FOOD-SAFE EASTER

Keep Easter Joyful with Simple Guidelines for Happy Hunting and Brunching

CHICAGO (Mar. 2, 2015) – Springtime, egg hunts, candy, bunnies and delicious family meals. These festive events are the hallmarks of Easter, and with a few tips from STOP Foodborne Illness (www.stopfoodborneillness.org), those celebrating this year can be assured of a safe and happy holiday.

“It is important to take precautions with eggs and other perishable foods to avoid foodborne illness,” said Deirdre Schlunegger, chief executive officer of STOP Foodborne Illness, the leading national advocate for safe food. “Because a few simple facts and steps can make Easter safer, STOP wants to make sure that the public knows how to buy, prepare and safely handle eggs and other food items on this holiday.”

STOP's Food Safety Guidelines for Easter

DO

- When cooking, always start with clean hands. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after you handle food.
- Remember to avoid cross contamination by keeping kitchen surfaces and equipment clean, using separate knives and cutting boards for different foods.
- Use only food-safe dyes on Easter eggs. After decorating, put them in the refrigerator right away.
- Abide by the “best by” date on the egg carton. It is best to throw out old eggs than to risk sickness.
- Trust your nose. Although some “bad” eggs have an off-smelling odor, bad eggs don't always smell bad.

DON'T

- Don't cook hard-boiled eggs too far in advance. Hard-boiled eggs spoil more quickly than uncooked eggs and should be consumed within one week.
- Don't eat hard-boiled eggs that have been out of refrigeration more than two hours.
- Don't eat Easter eggs that have been placed on the ground.
- Don't eat cracked or dirty eggs.
- Don't lick a spoon that has ingredients like raw egg as in cookie dough.
- Don't put your eggs in the refrigerator door. Your refrigerator should be at 40 F or below. STOP Foodborne Illness recommends using a thermometer in your refrigerator to monitor the temperature.

PROPER SAFE EGG COOKING TIPS

- STOP Foodborne Illness recommends using plastic eggs for Easter Egg hunts rather than real eggs. But if you choose to use real hard-boiled eggs, make sure before eating them that they are clean, free of any cracks and have been returned to the refrigerator within two hours of finding them.
- Buy in-shell, pasteurized eggs if possible. Even fresh, organic or unbroken eggs can be contaminated with *Salmonella*. If the eggs aren't pasteurized, be sure to cook them until the yolks are firm.
- When cooking hard-boiled eggs, place a single layer of eggs in a saucepan. Cover the eggs with at least one inch of water. When the water is at a full boil, remove the pan from the heat source and let the eggs stay in the water for between 12-18 minutes depending on the size of the eggs. After the eggs have set for the appropriate amount of time, run cold water over the eggs. When the eggs have cooled just enough to handle, put them in the refrigerator.

For more food preparation safety tips please visit www.stopfoodborneillness.org. If you think you have been sickened from food, please contact STOP's helpline (1-800-350-STOP) which helps foodborne illness victims navigate the health system to figure out what they have, where it might have come from, and what to do next.

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About STOP Foodborne Illness, www.stopfoodborneillness.org

STOP Foodborne Illness (STOP) is a national, nonprofit, public health organization dedicated to preventing illness and death from foodborne pathogens. STOP achieves its mission by advocating for sound public policies, building public awareness and assisting those impacted by foodborne illness.

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