



## Egg Safety for Spring Celebrations



Although our family gatherings may be smaller this year, we may still plan to bake our favorite egg dishes for celebratory brunches and possibly hide them for an annual egg hunt. Egg dishes are a food prone to contain *Salmonella*, a bacteria that can cause a food borne illness sometimes referred to as food poisoning. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) estimates there are over 79,000 cases of food borne illness and 30 deaths each year caused by eating eggs contaminated with *Salmonella*.

How do we keep our family safe during this season of celebrations? First, start at the grocery store. Only buy eggs that are refrigerated. Check and make sure the eggs are clean with no cracks. If you are some distance from home, use an insulated bag or cooler for refrigerated or frozen foods. Store in your refrigerator at a 40°F temperature or below as soon as you arrive home. Do not store them in the refrigerator door. For best quality use within 3 weeks.

When cooking or baking with eggs there are a few food safety rules you should follow. Always cook the yolks and whites until firm. Scrambled eggs should not be runny. Any dish containing eggs, such as casseroles, should be baked to an internal temperature of 160°F. You should have a food thermometer in your kitchen, and this is the perfect time to use it! If your recipe calls for raw or undercooked eggs like Caesar salad, use eggs that have been pasteurized or a pasteurized egg product. Don't forget wash your hands, kitchen surfaces, and utensils with soap and water before and after coming in contact with raw eggs and raw egg products.

Serve egg dishes immediately after cooking. You can refrigerate for later use but always reheat to 165°F. Never leave raw or cooked eggs unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours or 1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F. Always remember the danger zone for any prepared food is between 40°F and 140°F. Illness causing bacteria grow quickly between these temperatures.

As for egg hunts, it is best to not use real eggs. Use plastic eggs with treats inside for a safer choice.

For more information view the FDA's video on egg safety. <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/what-you-need-know-about-egg-safety#video>

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