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Hide the Eggs Not the Bacteria!

When you are decorating, cooking or hiding Easter eggs, extra care is needed to enjoy them without the risk of getting sick. Here are some important safe handling tips to remember this time of year:

- Inspect eggs before purchasing them and make sure they are not dirty or cracked. Harmful bacteria may enter a cracked egg.
- Store eggs in their original carton in the refrigerator rather than the refrigerator door.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before handling eggs when cooking, cooling, dyeing and hiding them.
- Refrigerate hard-cooked eggs until just before the hunt.
- If you are having an egg hunt, consider hiding places carefully. Avoid areas where eggs might come into contact with pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects, lawn chemicals, or other potential sources of bacteria.
- After the hunt, find all the eggs you have hidden. Discard cracked or dirty eggs and eggs left unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours. Rinse uncracked eggs and put them in the refrigerator until it's time to eat them. **DO NOT EAT hard-boiled eggs used for an egg hunt or as decorations if they have been at temperatures above 40°F for more than two hours; discard them.**
- Refrigerate hard-cooked eggs in their shells and use them within 1 week.

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This article was originally written by Alice Henneman, University of Nebraska Extension.

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