

Easter Eggs

Keep safety in mind when coloring Easter eggs and if hiding eggs or using for decoration. Because Easter eggs are handled so frequently, wash hands thoroughly before handling eggs at every step, including cooking, cooling, and dyeing. Take advantage of the occasion to teach youngsters about cleanliness and safe food handling.

Selecting eggs to color: Eggs stored in the refrigerator about 10 days will peel more easily after cooking than very fresh eggs. Sometimes eggs that have been stored for a few weeks will float. There is no need to be concerned. This tells us the egg is not real fresh, but there is no safety problem with it. In fact, it should peel easily.

Preparation of eggs: Put eggs in single layer in pan, add cold water to cover with 1 inch of water. Cover the pan. Bring just to boil and turn off heat, leave on burner, for 15-17 minutes for large eggs. Cool in ice water or cold running water and then store in the refrigerator.

Dyeing eggs: If eggs will be eaten, use food coloring or specially-made food-grade egg dyes. For simple dyeing, squeeze a few drops of food coloring into water warmer than the egg along with 2 or 3 teaspoons of white vinegar for each cup of water. Then submerge the egg until the shade is to your liking. Another method is to paint full strength food coloring onto the egg with a brush. For another effect, press a clean, food color-dipped sponge onto the shell. Be creative!!

Prepared by Iowa State University Families Extension ANSWER LINE, Elisabeth Schafer, Extension Nutrition Specialist