

QUICK FACTS: HAPPY EASTER

Decorating, Hiding and Hunting the Good Eggs

Eggs have long symbolized fertility and new life. Decorating eggs for Easter began in the 13th century and has been a popular part of Spring traditions ever since. Make your celebrations all the better by including egg safety in your holiday basket!

Check out our **Rainbow of Guidelines** for having the safest eggs in your basket.

Red #1: Always choose clean and fresh eggs. When purchasing eggs, open the carton and make sure they're clean, and intact. Handle with care: Chickens can harbor Salmonella without showing any signs of being sick, so all unpasteurized eggs -- even those that are fresh, organic, or unbroken -- can contain Salmonella. Buying in-shell pasteurized eggs reduces that risk.

Orange #2: Refrigerate your eggs at 40°F or below. Safely storing and cooking your eggs before consumption is important. When storing eggs make sure they go in the fridge, not the fridge door. Once hard-cooked, refrigerated eggs can be stored for up to one week.

Yellow #3: Wash your hands thoroughly. Everybody, including children, must wash their hands with soap and water before and after handling eggs -- which includes prepping, cooking, cooling, dyeing, hiding and hunting them. See [Quick Facts: Wash Your Hands](#)

Green #4: Follow the 2-hour rule. Eggs can be out of refrigeration for 2 hours (when it's under 90°F) and still be safe to eat. Do not eat eggs that have been out longer than that. Colored eggs used for decoration (for several hours or days) should not be eaten.

Blue #5: When in doubt throw them out. Cracked eggs should never be used. Even though eggs will show signs of spoilage (taste, smell, appearance) when they're past the "best by" date, we don't recommend using this as an indicator of an egg's safeness -- mainly because eggs that harbor Salmonella taste, smell, and appear exactly the same as "normal" eggs.

Indigo #6: Use care when hiding eggs outside or in. Avoid areas where eggs would come in contact with pets, wild animals, birds, or lawn chemicals. Don't hide cracked eggs because bacteria could contaminate the inside. Eating eggs that have been on the ground is not recommended. The total time for hiding and hunting eggs should not exceed 2 hours.

Violet #7: Use only food-safe dyes, and other food safe materials when decorating eggs. Consider using plastic eggs (instead of real ones) for the egg hunt, as that would provide an extra layer of safety.

Every year there are illnesses caused by eggs -- especially from dishes that use raw eggs, like Caesar salad dressing, hollandaise sauce, or custards. Just because there are egg-associated outbreaks doesn't mean you should stop eating eggs. However, it does mean you should practice safe handling with all kinds of food, including eggs.

SOURCES: Food Safety News,
University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture,
and USDA



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SPRING CLEANING FOR FOOD SAFETY

Spring is the time of year when most people start fresh – clearing out the old and bringing in the new. Making these guidelines a yearly ritual will get your season off to a good start, because one thing that never gets old is keeping your family safe.

Check & Chuck – All food and drink must be removed while you're cleaning the fridge. Wipe down any sticky bottles, jars, cans and containers before you put them in a cooler with freezer packs/ice or a 2nd refrigerator. When the cleaning is done, remember to let the refrigerator cool down to a safe temperature before putting food items back in.

Wipe Out – Once empty, remove all drawers, shelves, and racks from the fridge. Using warm water and dish detergent clean the sides, doors, door seals, ceiling and back removing all grime (and traces of soap). Don't forget the door handles. Then, using a fresh cloth wipe down all the surfaces of the fridge with a disinfectant. Wash all the removable parts in the sink with hot water and detergent, rinsing them with a water & bleach solution. Allow them to air dry.
See [Quick Facts: Clean, Sanitize, & Disinfect](#)

The Door – The door is the warmest part of the fridge and not designed for easily perishable foods including eggs and milk. Keep these items in the innermost part of the fridge. Save the door for canned and bottled drinks, condiments, and water.

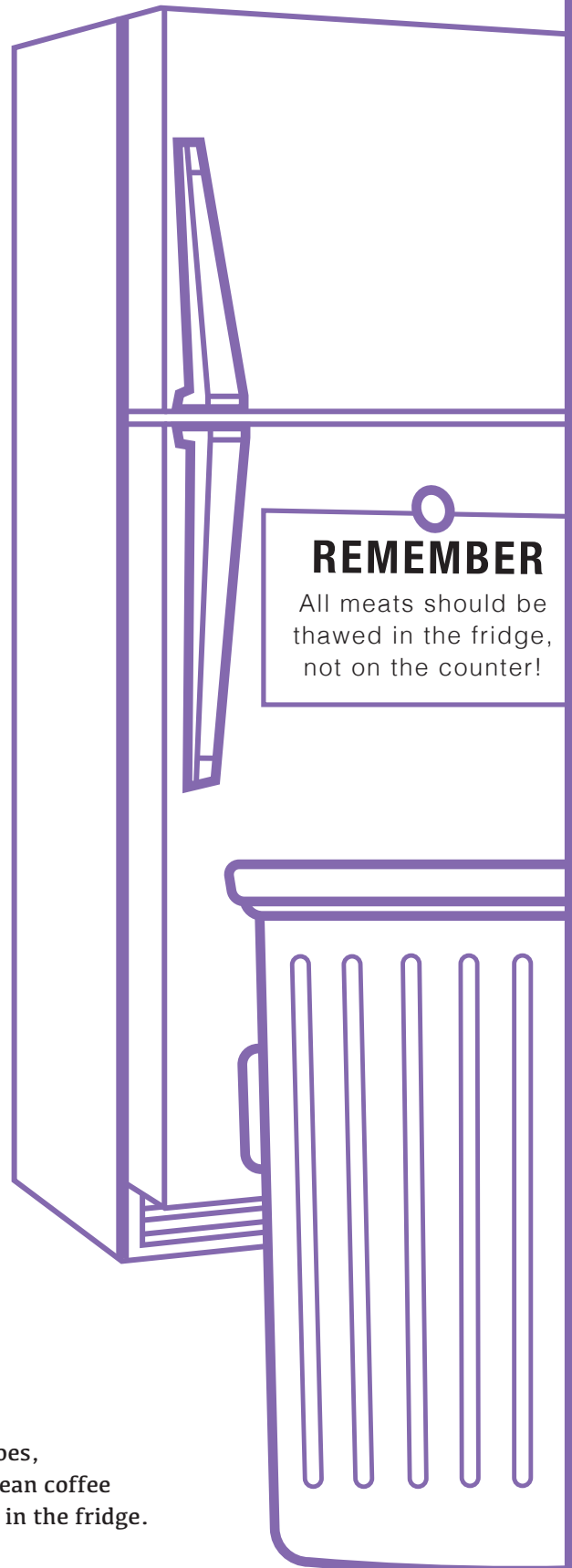
The Bottom Shelf – Store meats on the lowest shelf. This way, if they ever leak, the juices won't drip on other fresh items.

Cool It – Use a thermometer to make sure your fridge is at least 40°F and your freezer is at least 0°F. In warmer months, the internal temperature of your fridge may increase, so check it seasonally.

Be Energy Efficient – Food stays fresher longer when the fridge can breathe. Ensure all items in the fridge have adequate air flow around them. While it is convenient to bulk shop, packing your fridge to the gills means that some foods will become too cold, while others aren't kept cold enough. Conversely, the freezer is **most efficient** when it is as full as possible.

Freezer Burn – While freezer burnt items may not be pretty, they're still safe to eat. To maintain food quality, remove as much air from the package as possible, and freeze quickly.

Keep Cool – Bananas, onions, whole tomatoes, avocados, potatoes, and ground or whole bean coffee should be kept in a cool, dry place, but not in the fridge.



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Store all unrefrigerated food items far away from cleaning supplies.