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Contact:
What Are Your Easter Eggs Hiding?

For those who celebrate Easter, a cherished annual tradition often includes boiling and decorating eggs. However, there are some guidelines to keep in mind to minimize the chance of food-borne illness via Easter eggs during this season. Help make sure that the only things you're hiding are Easter eggs, and not potential food-borne illness!

Preparation of the Easter Eggs

Every time an egg is handled, its chance of bacterial contamination increases. Therefore, wash your hands thoroughly before handling any eggs, at every step of the process, including cooking, cooling, and dyeing. Refrigerate hard-cooked eggs in their cartons if you won't be coloring them right after cooking. Refrigerate them again right after dyeing or displaying them.

Color only uncracked eggs. If you want to eat your dyed eggs later, use food coloring or specially made food-grade egg dyes dissolved in water that is warmer than the eggs. If any eggs crack while dyeing or while on display, discard them along with any eggs that have been out of refrigeration for more than two hours.

Handling, Hiding/Storage of Easter Eggs

If you keep hard-cooked eggs out of refrigeration for longer than two hours while decorating them, or while they are being hidden, cook extra eggs for eating. Either discard the eggs that have been left out, or use them only for display.

If you hide eggs, consider hiding places carefully. Avoid places where the egg might come into contact with dirt, pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, or lawn chemicals. You'll also want to make sure that you remember all the places you hid Easter eggs, rather than discovering some a month later under the couch! Remember to refrigerate eggs you intend to eat, and ensure that they aren't out of refrigeration for longer than two hours. Consider hiding plastic eggs, and keeping the decorated, boiled eggs, refrigerated for later consumption.

The Wyoming Food Safety Coalition provides food safety programs and information to all ages. For more food safety information, contact a WFSC team member: Donna Birkholz, University Extension Educator (phone number); Sue Mickelson, Consumer Health Specialist, Wyoming Department of Agriculture (phone number); or Gerry Olson, Consumer Health Specialist, Wyoming Department of Agriculture (phone number).