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Spring . . . A Great Time for Eggs!

It's spring — the season to enjoy the great outdoors and celebrate special occasions, like Easter, Passover, and graduation! While eggs are used all year 'round, they are especially important for many spring-and-summertime activities. They are used for cooking festive delights and for decorating and hiding just before the big Easter egg hunt.

Like all perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, seafood, and produce, eggs need to be handled properly to prevent foodborne illness. Occasionally, eggs with clean, uncracked shells can be contaminated with bacteria.

If foods containing harmful bacteria are consumed, they can cause foodborne illness. That's why it's important to cook eggs thoroughly and use a probe (food) thermometer to make sure egg-containing foods reach a safe internal temperature.

Here's what YOU can do to have a safe and *eggs-cellent* spring and summer!

Clean Up, Clean Up . . .



- Before you begin preparing holiday dishes, remember that clean hands are key! Always wash hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds *before* and *after* food preparation, as well as when you're handling raw animal products, such as raw eggs.
- Beware of cross-contamination. Foodborne illness can occur when kitchen equipment is not thoroughly washed between uses. Always wash surfaces and cooking equipment, including blenders, in hot, soapy water *before* and *after* food preparation.

Cook and Keep Cool . . .

- Bacteria can multiply in moist foods, including desserts and salads containing high-protein foods. Refrigeration *slows* bacterial growth, so it's important to refrigerate eggs and egg-containing foods.
- Remember the 2-Hour Rule: Don't leave perishables out at room temperature for more than 2 hours. Bacteria love to grow in protein-rich foods.
- Whether you like your breakfast eggs scrambled or fried, always cook eggs until the yolks and whites are firm.
- Tasting is tempting, but licking a spoon or tasting raw cookie dough from a mixing bowl can be risky. Bacteria could be lurking in the raw eggs.
- Cook cheesecakes, lasagna, and egg dishes to an internal temperature of at least 160° F. Use a probe thermometer to check the internal temperature.

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