



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **Easter Egg Fun...the safe way!**

### ***Remember egg safety during the Easter holiday***

COLUMBUS – Along with butterflies and chirping birds, spring brings the classic tradition of not only the Easter Bunny, but also dyeing eggs. In Ohio, the Easter season is big business, as the Buckeye state produces nearly eight billion eggs each year.

While egg-decorating is a fun family event, there are a lot of things to keep in mind when purchasing, cooking, decorating and storing/consuming your eggs.

#### ***Purchasing:***

The first thing to think about in terms of your Easter eggs is whether or not they will be consumed after being used for their aesthetic purpose. If you are planning to consume the eggs, buy them a week to 10 days ahead of time for easy peeling. **Also, when planning to consume the eggs, keep the following safety tips in mind:**

- Wash your hands between all the steps of cooking, cooling, dyeing and decorating.
- Be sure that all the decorating materials you use are food-safe.
- Keep the eggs refrigerated as much as possible. Be sure to put them back into the refrigerator whenever you are not working with them.
- Dye the eggs in water warmer than the eggs so they do not absorb the dye water.
- If you hide the decorated eggs, put them where they will not come into contact with pets, other animals or birds or lawn chemicals.
- After you have found all the hidden eggs, throw out any that have cracked or have been out at room temperature for more than two hours. Eat uncracked, refrigerated hard-cooked eggs within a week of cooking them.

#### ***Cooking:***

Next, be sure to hard-cook eggs instead of boiling them. This gentle cooking approach will prevent cracking and an unattractive green ring from forming around the yolk. To hard-cook eggs, bring them to a boil and then remove from heat. Leave the eggs, covered, in the hot water for about 15 minutes. For more details on hard-cooking eggs, visit the recipes section of [www.aeb.org](http://www.aeb.org).

#### ***Decorating:***

When it comes to decorating eggs, the possibilities are endless! You can dye eggs simply with food coloring, special egg dyes or dyes made from natural foods. You can also paint the eggs, make them into faces or animals and cover them with sequins and other materials. Follow these steps to create your own natural egg dye:

- Select your produce and spices – many colorful natural ingredients will release their color when boiled in water. Some colorful sources include canned beets, blueberries and cherries. Other sources include chopped red cabbage, onion and Yellow Delicious apple skins, chili powder and black coffee.
- Next, boil the natural dye-sources and eggs. Simply simmer each dye-source in individual pots for about 30 minutes. Before adding the raw eggs, warm them to room temperature (to avoid cracking), remove the dye-source from the water and add two tablespoons of vinegar.
- The longer the eggs remain in each solution, the darker they will become, taking on more of the natural dye. To become hard-boiled, the eggs must remain in the boiling water for 20 to 30 minutes. Leave the eggs in the water until cool and be sure to refrigerate your finished products.

### *Consuming:*

Your uniquely-decorated eggs have served their purpose as the traditional Easter decoration. Now what – throw them away? Not the incredible, edible egg! As an excellent source of protein and essential amino acids, eggs provide 13 essential nutrients with only about 75 calories. There are countless ways to re-use this Easter novelty. Some recipes are listed below.

- **Egg salad** – Chop the eggs and add a moistening ingredient, such as mayonnaise, sour cream, yogurt or a bottled salad dressing. Then, add shredded or chopped pieces of other foods that you like (for example: vegetables, meats and olives). If you want, you can also stir in spices, chopped chives, snipped parsley or another herb.
- **Deviled eggs** – Cut the eggs in half lengthwise. Spoon out the yolks and place into a plastic food storage bag along with a moistening ingredient (listed above) and any other ingredients you would like to add. Seal the bag and roll around in your hands until everything is well blended. Snip off a corner and squeeze the bag to squirt the yolk mixture into the egg whites.
- **Creamed eggs** – Chop the eggs and make a white sauce. Add anything you like to the sauce – shredded or grated cheese, chopped olives, pimiento or herbs. Add the chopped eggs and heat to serving temperature. Serve the creamed eggs over toast or biscuits.
- **Breakfast pizza** – Spread pizza sauce on English muffin halves and top with sliced egg, shredded cheese and any other pizza toppings (mushrooms, chopped green peppers or onions). Bake or microwave the mini pizzas until the cheese is melted.
- **Sandwiches** – Layer sliced egg with other favorite sandwich fixings to make a hearty submarine, hero or hoagie sandwich.

Your egg purchases help support Ohio's egg industry, the second-largest egg producing state in the nation. For more information on Ohio egg production or for egg recipes, please visit the Ohio Poultry Association at [www.ohiopoultry.org](http://www.ohiopoultry.org).

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