

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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March 18, 2005

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Buy Your Eggs Now

If you have any plans associated with the Easter Bunny bringing colored Easter eggs to your house in a couple of weeks, now is the time to buy those plain white eggs. If you wait until the day before to buy eggs to color, your children will have a very hard time peeling them later. Fresh eggs do not peel well. Since most eggs in the store are only a day or two old, you need to 'age' them at home. Get them now, keep them for a week, and they will peel much more easily on Easter Sunday.

As long as you keep them refrigerated, eggs will be safe and good quality for several weeks or more. Storing them in the carton they come in will improve the quality in two ways. First, it helps protect them from other odors in the refrigerator. Egg shells are porous, so odors from other foods such as onions or apples, can seep in. They have such a mild flavor that almost any other odor will be noticed.

Secondly, because of the pores in the shell, moisture from the egg can seep out. Keeping them in the carton helps hold some of that moisture around them, so they lose less. This maintains a better quality egg white. Even so, older eggs won't make as good a meringue as fresh ones will. But Easter needs hard cooked eggs, not meringue. And older eggs separate more easily from the shell.

Once you have the eggs safely refrigerated, think about when you will color them and when you will use them. Remember that once cooked, eggs can only safely be at room temperature for **two hours**. Put the cold eggs in a pan of water and heat on high

until boiling. When the water boils turn the heat down and simmer for 13-17 minutes. Drain off the hot water, put them in a dish, and refrigerate them to cool. That did not use any of the two safe hours.

When it's time for coloring, everybody wash their hands first!. Let the eggs warm while you cover the table with paper and mix the dyes. (Food dyes only please!) Decorate and dip in the dye. As soon as they are dry, back into the refrigerator they go. If it takes one hour to decorate them, then they will still have one hour to sit in glory in their basket on Easter morning. Once the children have their chance to ooh and aah over the contents of their baskets, the eggs need to go back into the refrigerator.

You can let each child decorate an egg carton to hold their own. That way they know which eggs are theirs, and can feel safe that no one else will eat theirs. It's also a good way to emphasize food safety with the little ones.

If you leave them sitting out for more than two hours, then they should be admired, and thrown away. For egg hunts, it really is safer to hide plastic eggs. Let the children redeem each plastic egg for a real, refrigerated one after the fun. Remember that children do not have as much resistance to bacteria as adults do, so it does not take as many to make them sick.

Now, what are you going to do with so many hard boiled eggs? In the shell, hard cooked eggs will keep for up to 1 week in the refrigerator. Hard eggs are a good addition to salads and sandwiches for their high quality protein. And since they are boiled, there is no additional fat to turn into cholesterol and clog up our arteries. The American Heart Association says that several eggs a week are not normally a problem. So, here's a quick and easy recipe that the children can help you mix up, for everyone to enjoy. Happy Easter!

Toasted Tuna Melts

1 7-oz can tuna, drained	4 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
3/4 cup low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded	2 Tbsp onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup low-fat mayonnaise	1/4 tsp Worcestershire sauce
4 buns or English muffins	Pepper, paprika if desired

Combine tuna, eggs, cheese, onion, mayonnaise, sauce, and pepper if desired. Blend well. Spread evenly on the open-face buns or English muffins. Sprinkle with paprika. Cook under broiler until cheese melts and buns are toasted. Serve immediately.

Serves 4.

(Recipe courtesy of Florida Poultry Federation)

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