

## SAFETY TIPS AT EASTER

Easter celebrations can include preparing traditional meals, decorating eggs or enjoying the arrival of baby animals. Here are some ways to keep everyone safe during this special time of year.



### Food Safety Tips

#### **Clean:**

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap before eating or preparing food, and after handling raw poultry, fish, meat and eggs.
- Encourage children to wash their hands before eating or helping in the kitchen.
- Wash kitchen utensils, cutting boards, countertops and sinks with hot water and soap. For extra safety after working with raw meats, poultry, fish and eggs, sanitize washed surfaces and utensils with a mild bleach solution. To make a mild bleach solution, add 1/4 tsp (1 mL) of bleach to 2 cups of water.

#### **Don't cross-contaminate:**

- In the grocery cart and at home, keep raw meat, poultry and fish from touching cooked food and ready-to-eat food such as fruit, vegetables and desserts.
- Have a separate cutting board for raw meat, poultry and fish.
- Change dishcloths and kitchen hand towels often. Sanitize kitchen sponges with boiling water or a mild bleach solution.

#### **Cook to safe temperatures:**

- Ham is an Easter favourite and can be bought uncooked or ready-to-eat. Check the label at the store so you know which type of ham you are buying.
- Cook "uncooked" hams to an internal temperature of 71°C (160°F) or higher. Check with a meat thermometer. Ready-to-eat hams are fully cooked. Serve cold or reheat.

#### **Chill:**

- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers quickly. Cut meat into smaller pieces so it will cool faster.

### Decorating Hard-cooked Eggs

- Cook eggs until the yolks and whites are firm.

How to hard-cook eggs: Put eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and add water until it is an inch above the eggs. Cover the pan and bring to a boil. Take off the heat and let the eggs sit for 18 – 23 minutes. Cool in cold water. Source: *Get Cracking*, <http://www.eggs.ca>

- Use food-grade dyes for decorating hard-cooked eggs and keep them refrigerated until just before serving or hiding them for an Easter egg hunt. Hard-cooked eggs keep up to 1 week in the fridge.
- The total time for hiding and finding eggs should not be more than 2 hours. After the hunt, eat the eggs as soon as possible.
- A safe alternative is to decorate two sets of eggs. Refrigerate one set to eat after the hunt. Use the second set for the Easter egg hunt and then discard. Even better, use plastic eggs or wrapped candy eggs for the hunt.

### **Keep Children Safe at Animal Displays**

- Spring means the arrival of all kinds of baby animals, and some of them, such as chicks, calves or lambs, may be part of Easter activities or displays. Animals may have bacteria such as Salmonella or E. coli O157:H7 on their fur or feathers, so parents and caregivers should be extra cautious with children under 5 years of age who want to touch, hold or kiss the animals.
- Young children have immature immune systems, often put their hands in their mouths and need help with handwashing. To reduce the risk of illness for young children, look for activities and displays where they can watch but not touch the animals.
- Make hand washing a family affair when leaving animal displays and before eating.

For more information, please call the Environmental Health Program, Alberta Health Services at 403-943-2288 or click on the Environmental Health website:

<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/publichealth/envhealth/>

[Food Thermometer Food Safety Tips, Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\)](#)

[Food safety tips for eggs, Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\)](#)

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) "Peep, chirp, quack!"

[http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/easter\\_chicks.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/easter_chicks.htm)

Health Canada It's Your Health, Salmonella Prevention

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/salmonella\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/salmonella_e.html)

Original: April 2007

Last update: March 2009