

Egg Safety – Q & A

By Janet Hackert, Regional Nutrition and Health Education Specialist

There is much to know about eggs and keeping them safe to eat. Here are a few tidbits.

Q: Are green eggs safe to eat? A: The green ring around the yolk of a hard-cooked egg is an indication of a natural reaction of the sulfur and iron compounds around the surface of the yolk. It may not look great but it is safe and does not affect the flavor of the egg.

Q: What makes eggshells green or brown or blue? A: Eggshells start out white but can end up other colors because of pigments that permeate the shell as the egg is being laid. What color the shell ends up depends on the breed. For example, an egg that is the result of a cross between a hen and rooster, one that produces blue eggs and one that produces brown eggs, would create an olive green egg.

Q: How long will eggs stay safe in the refrigerator?

A: Whole, raw eggs in the shell should be used within 3 weeks of the sell-by date or 4-5 weeks of the packing date. The sell-by date is stamped on the carton and is recognizable as a date. The packing date is also on the carton, but is in code. A smart consumer can know when the eggs were packed though. For example, the carton may have “P 1692 070 SELL BY Apr 8” on it. The last three digits of the first number indicate the pack date, using the Julian calendar. In the Julian dating system, the numbers represent the consecutive days of the year. January 1st would be written as 001, and December 31st would be 365. In this example the carton was packed on day number 070, or March 11th. The [American Egg Board](#) says that fresh shell eggs can be stored in their cartons in the refrigerator for 4 to 5 weeks beyond the pack date without significant quality loss. These eggs would be good until April 8th or even as long as April 15th.

Hard-cooked eggs can be safely stored in the refrigerator for one week; raw egg whites for 4 days and raw egg yolks for 2 days, according to the American Egg Board. Eggs, whether raw or cooked, should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours.

Q: If a raw egg floats, is it bad? A: It is not necessarily spoiled but floating is a sign that the egg is old. The air sac inside the shell expands with age, making the egg float. A bad egg will have an off smell or unusual appearance when opened. Throw these eggs away.

For more information on egg safety or any other topic, contact me, Janet Hackert, at 660-425-6434 or HackertJ@missouri.edu or your local [University of Missouri Extension office](#). University of Missouri Extension - your one-stop source for practical education on almost anything.

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