

Eggs and Egg-Rich Food

Eggs can be part of a healthy diet. However, they are perishable just like raw meat, poultry, and seafood — and just like these foods, they must be properly refrigerated in the store and at home and cooked for safety. So get cracking!

Storing:

- **Refrigerate Eggs.** Take eggs straight home and store them in their original carton in the refrigerator. Follow the 2-Hour Rule: Never allow eggs to be unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours.
 - Place them in the coldest part of the refrigerator — not in the door, where they'd be exposed to warmer air every time the door is opened.
 - If any eggs cracked on the way home from the store, break them into a clean container, cover tightly, refrigerate, and use within 2 days.
- **Keep Easter/Decorated Eggs Refrigerated, Too.** Even with egg hunts, the 2-Hour Rule still applies — make sure your “hide-and-seek” activities occur within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F), and then re-refrigerate the eggs.
- **Freeze Beaten Eggs for Longer Storage.** Eggs should not be frozen in their shells. To freeze whole eggs, beat yolks and whites together. Egg whites can also be frozen by themselves.

Cooking:

- **Cook Thoroughly.** To ensure safety, eggs must be cooked until **yolks are firm**. Scrambled eggs should *not* be runny.
 - Raw eggs and other ingredients, combined according to recipe directions, should be cooked immediately or refrigerated and cooked within 24 hours.
 - Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to 160 °F as measured with a food thermometer.
 - Serve cooked eggs and dishes containing eggs immediately after cooking, or place in shallow containers for quick cooling and refrigerate at once for later use. Use within 3 to 4 days.
 - If eggs crack during hard cooking, they are safe.
- **Never Eat Raw Eggs.** This includes “health-food” milk shakes with raw eggs, Caesar salad, Hollandaise sauce, and any other food, like homemade mayonnaise, ice cream, or eggnog, made from recipes in which the raw egg ingredients are not cooked.
- All egg products (such as liquid eggs) distributed for consumption are pasteurized and may be used in products that will not be cooked. However, egg products are best used in a cooked product, especially if serving high-risk persons (pregnant women, newborns, young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems).



Egg Storage Chart

Product	Refrigerator	Freezer
Raw eggs in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze. Instead, beat yolks and whites together; then freeze.
Raw egg whites	2 to 4 days	12 months
Raw egg yolks	2 to 4 days	Yolks do not freeze well.
Raw egg accidentally frozen in shell	Use immediately after thawing.	Keep frozen; then refrigerate to thaw.
Hard-cooked eggs	1 week	Do not freeze.
Egg substitutes, liquid	<i>Unopened</i>	10 days
	<i>Opened</i>	3 days
Egg substitutes, frozen	<i>Unopened</i>	After thawing, 7 days, or refer to “Use-By” date
	<i>Opened</i>	After thawing, 3 days, or refer to “Use-By” date
Casseroles with eggs	3 to 4 days	After baking, 2 to 3 months.
Eggnog	<i>Commercial</i>	3 to 5 days
	<i>Homemade</i>	2 to 4 days
Pies	Pumpkin or pecan	3 to 4 days
	Custard and chiffon	3 to 4 days
Quiche with filling	3 to 4 days	After baking, 1 to 2 months.

Egg Recipes: Playing it Safe

- ✓ **Egg mixtures** are safe if they reach **160 °F**.
- ✓ **Homemade ice cream and eggnog** are safe if made from a cooked **egg-milk mixture**. Heat it gently and use a food thermometer to ensure that it reaches **160 °F**.
- ✓ **Dry meringue shells, divinity candy, and 7-minute frosting** are safe — these are made by combining hot sugar syrup with beaten egg whites. However, avoid icing recipes using uncooked eggs or egg whites.
- ✓ **Meringue-topped pies** should be safe if baked at **350 °F** for about 15 minutes. But avoid chiffon pies and fruit whips made with raw, beaten egg whites — instead, substitute pasteurized dried egg whites, whipped cream, or a whipped topping.
- ✓ **Adapting Recipes:** If your recipe calls for uncooked eggs, make it safe by heating the eggs in one of the recipe's other liquid ingredients over low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture reaches **160 °F**. Then, combine it with the other ingredients and complete the recipe.
- ✓ **Use a Food Thermometer:** To determine safety in egg dishes such as quiche and casseroles, the center of the mixture should reach 160 °F when measured with a food thermometer.