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**Observing Food Safety During Easter Egg Hunt Activities**

As we enter the Easter Season, decorating eggs and hosting egg hunts are fun holiday traditions for many families on Guam. The Division of Environmental Health of the Department of Public Health and Social Services encourages the public to use plastic eggs instead of real eggs during egg hunting activities to prevent food-borne illnesses from potentially occurring.

However, if you do decide to use real eggs, the following food safety practices should be observed:

1. When shopping for eggs, inspect all egg cartons before purchasing and avoid any cartons with cracked eggs. Only use eggs that are intact and without cracks.
2. Remember to store all eggs in the refrigerator as soon as possible.
3. Taking eggs out of the carton is not recommended as the carton will protect the eggs from easily cracking and prevent the eggs from leaking onto other foods should the eggs crack.
4. During refrigeration, keep all eggs separate from raw meats. Raw meats have the potential to contaminate the eggshells.
5. Remember to keep eggs in the coldest part of the refrigerator and not stored in the door compartment.
6. Check your refrigerator temperature with an appliance thermometer and adjust the refrigerator temperature to 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
7. Always wash hands with warm water and soap for about 20 seconds before handling eggs at every step from cooking, cooling, dyeing, and hiding the eggs.
8. When you boil the eggs, make sure the water reaches a temperature of 185 – 195 degrees Fahrenheit. Cool the eggs in cool water or simply air dry before decorating.
9. Care should be taken when hiding the eggs. Do not place the eggs where they might come in contact with pets, wild animals, and lawn chemicals.
10. Throw out or do not eat any eggs that are cracked, soiled or dirty, and any eggs that have been kept out from the refrigerator for more than two (2) hours.
11. When hosting an Easter Egg hunt, collect all unfound eggs to ensure it's all accounted for; otherwise, it may be found days, if not months, later with an unpleasant and unwanted surprise.

The public is encouraged to follow these egg safety tips for an enjoyable Easter season to prevent food-borne illnesses.

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