

Using eggs safely in food service and manufacturing

Safe food handling practices for restaurants, cafes, bakeries, caterers and manufacturers that use eggs in the preparation of food.

Foods that contain raw or lightly cooked egg need extra care

Foodborne illness has been associated with such foods, including:

- sauces and spreads such as mayonnaise, aioli, hollandaise and egg butter
- desserts made without a cooking step such as cheesecake, tiramisu and mousse
- foods containing lightly cooked eggs such as custard and fried ice cream
- drinks such as eggnog and egg flip

Food safety law now in force

The NSW Government has introduced a new food safety law. Called the Egg Food Safety Scheme (the Scheme), it was developed to ensure whole eggs continue to be safe and to minimise the risk of foodborne illness associated with foods that contain raw or lightly cooked egg.

The Scheme prohibits the sale of dirty or broken eggs for human consumption. Additionally, the Scheme only permits the sale of cracked eggs and unpasteurised egg products (eg pulp) to businesses licensed with the Authority to pasteurise egg product.

This means that food service and manufacturing businesses can only purchase and use whole clean eggs or pasteurised egg products in the preparation of food.

More information on the Scheme, how to apply for a licence with the Authority, and the requirements for licensed egg businesses is available at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/industry-sector-requirements/eggs/

Food businesses must also comply with all provisions of the *Food Act 2003* (NSW) and the Food Standards Code to ensure that food manufactured and sold is safe and suitable to eat. There are serious penalties for selling unsafe or unsuitable food.

This legislation covers labelling, general food handling (eg receipt, storage, processing, packaging, transport, health and hygiene, cleaning and sanitation), and premises and equipment requirements.

Helpful egg definitions

Dirty eggs are those eggs whose shell is contaminated with visible faeces, soil or other matter (eg yolk, albumen, feathers).

Broken eggs are eggs with a cracked shell and a broken shell membrane.

Cracked eggs are eggs with a cracked shell (where a crack is visible by the naked eye or by candling) and an unbroken shell membrane. Hairline cracks often escape visual detection and can worsen as eggs move through the supply chain.



Example of hairline crack



Example of dirty eggs

Egg products contain at least 80% egg white or yolk, or both. Examples include fresh liquid (eg pulp), frozen and dried whole eggs, egg white or egg yolk; salted and sugared yolks.

Using eggs safely

Receival of eggs

Only accept eggs that are:

- supplied in clean packaging
- correctly labelled (ie with name of the food, the supplier's name and address, and lot identification or date marking)
- clean, not cracked or leaking

Handling and storage

- whole eggs should be stored at $\leq 15^{\circ}\text{C}$ prior to use, and used by the 'best before' date
- do not wash eggs; this makes them more susceptible to contamination
- minimise contact between the shell and the contents of the egg when breaking eggs
- once eggs are broken, immediately use them in food; do not store liquid egg product

- wash and dry hands before and after handling eggs
- keep kitchen surfaces, utensils and bowls clean and dry
- use a clean separate container for each batch; do not top up sauces, mayonnaise or egg butter
- always keep foods that contain raw or lightly cooked eggs refrigerated, and discard after 48 hours
- have your process and recipe checked by an expert food technologist

Cooking eggs

- cook eggs until the white is firm and the yolk begins to thicken

Use safer alternatives

- for foods that traditionally contain raw or lightly cooked eggs (eg mayonnaise, hollandaise sauce, mousse, custard), use commercially prepared foods or mixes instead of making these foods from eggs
- use pasteurised pulp instead of whole eggs as an ingredient in foods that traditionally contain raw or lightly cooked eggs. For example:
 - processed whole eggs, egg whites and egg yolks are available in liquid, frozen or dried forms
 - sugared egg yolk is available for cakes and desserts
 - salted egg yolk is available for mayonnaise and sauces

More information

- visit the NSW Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406

For more information on the Food Standards Code:

- visit the Food Standards Australia New Zealand's (FSANZ) website at www.foodstandards.gov.au

About the NSW Food Authority

The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure that food sold in NSW is safe and correctly labelled.

It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to limit foodborne illness by regulating the safety of the production, storage, preparation and promotion of food.

Note

This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).