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Sushi safety best in years

A Food Authority survey of sushi outlets in NSW has found Sushi safety standards the highest they have been in years, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said.

“The survey found that 98 per cent of products were microbiologically safe, and none of the samples presented any risk to human health,” Mr Macdonald said.

“This is good news for Sushi lovers and shows the Government initiative to develop industry safety guidelines in 2007 has paid dividends.

“Many of the ingredients in sushi can present a health risk because they are raw and left unrefrigerated for lengthy periods. That is why the Authority has developed a multilingual safety guideline for sushi retailers and is working closely with local councils to conduct regular monitoring surveys.

The latest survey involved 87 sushi samples randomly selected from NSW outlets.

Three samples were found to have small traces of the potentially harmful *Listeria monocytogenes* bacteria, but were not a risk to human health and local councils took appropriate remedial action.

Mr Macdonald said regular surveys were part of an on-going initiative to consolidate the high safety standards of sushi in NSW.

The Food Authority recommends that sushi be consumed shortly after it has been freshly prepared and refrigerated below 5°C immediately after.

The Authority also advises those at higher risk of listeriosis poisoning – such as older people, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems – to avoid eating raw seafood including oysters and sushi.

Results of sushi safety surveys in the last three years are:

- **2009** NSW only – 87 samples from 15 shops- **98.3% acceptable**
 - **2008** national – 1000 samples from 89 shops - **97.1% acceptable**
 - **2007** NSW only – 330 samples from 46 shops - **97.3% acceptable**
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