

SAFE PREPARATION OF RAW EGG PRODUCTS

Restaurants, cafés, bakeries and caterers that prepare raw egg products need to follow safe handling practices or use a safer alternative.

Use safer alternatives

Businesses should use safer alternatives to raw eggs in foods which are not cooked:

- use commercially produced dressings, sauces and spreads instead of making raw egg products, or
- use pasteurised egg products instead of raw eggs in ready-to-eat products (products without a further cook step) such as desserts and drinks.

If a business chooses to use raw egg products, they are responsible for ensuring that the risk of Salmonella contamination is managed. They must take steps to ensure the food they supply is safe and suitable.

Foods that contain raw eggs need extra care

Products with raw eggs have been responsible for some of the largest foodborne illness outbreaks in NSW. This is because the disease-causing organism Salmonella is often found on the shell of whole eggs. If handled incorrectly the Salmonella will then contaminate the raw egg product.

Outbreaks harm customers and can severely impact the reputation and trade prospects of a business.

Foodborne illness has been associated with:

- egg dressings, sauces and spreads (e.g. mayonnaise, aioli, egg butter)
- desserts made without an effective cooking step (e.g. tiramisu, mousse, fried ice cream)
- drinks containing raw eggs (e.g. raw egg high protein smoothies).

Requirements for raw egg products

In order to ensure the food is safe to eat, special attention must be given to the preparation, storage and handling of eggs and raw egg products, to prevent the growth of Salmonella.

Acidify raw egg products to keep them safe, using vinegar or lemon juice

To stop Salmonella from growing it is important to:

- acidify raw egg product to a pH at or below 4.2 – this can be done using vinegar or lemon juice

- check and record the pH of the acidified raw egg product with a pH meter or pH paper.

Storage and temperature control of acidified raw egg product

- Keep acidified raw egg products at or below 5°C.
- Make acidified raw egg product fresh every day in small tubs, not in bulk.
- Discard acidified raw egg product within 24 hours.

Receival and storage of eggs

- Only purchase and receive whole eggs that are:
 - clean, not cracked or leaking
 - supplied in clean packaging
 - correctly labelled (i.e. with name of the food, the supplier's name and address, and lot identification or date marking).
- Whole eggs should be refrigerated at or below 5°C, and used by the 'best before' date.

Sanitation and hygiene

This is important in preventing the spread of Salmonella to other foods made by the business.



- Clean and sanitise kitchen equipment used for making raw egg products before and after each use.
- Clean and sanitise storage containers and dressings/sauce dispensers between each batch.
- Use separate containers for each batch of food (i.e. do not top up previous dressings and sauces).
- Keep kitchen surfaces and utensils clean and dry.
- Do not wash eggs as this makes them susceptible to further contamination.

Separating egg yolk from egg white

If Salmonella is present on the egg shell, it could be spread throughout the kitchen and onto other foods by your hands. To minimise contact between the egg shell and contents:

- wash and dry hands before and after handling eggs
- use a sanitised egg separator
- do not separate eggs using bare or gloved hands
- do not separate eggs using the egg shell
- do not store liquid raw eggs.
- once whole eggs are cracked, use them immediately in the raw egg product.

Safer egg alternatives are available

- Use pasteurised pulp for foods that traditionally contain raw eggs:
 - liquid, frozen or dried forms of processed whole eggs, egg whites and egg yolks
 - sugared egg yolk (for desserts)
 - salted egg yolk (for mayonnaise, dressings and sauces).

Food laws

The food laws in NSW prohibit the sale of eggs with dirty or cracked shells because this increases the risk of contamination and foodborne illness.

Egg definitions

- ‘Dirty eggs’ are eggs whose shell is contaminated with visible faeces, soil or other matter (e.g. yolk, albumen, feathers)
- ‘Cracked eggs’ are eggs with a cracked shell (where a crack is visible to the naked eye or by candling).

In order to protect customers from the risk of foodborne illness, businesses need to comply with Standard 3.2.2, Division 3, Clause 7 to ensure that only safe and suitable food is processed.

More information

- Visit the Food Authority website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au to download the following:
 - Food safety guidelines for the preparation of raw egg products
 - NSW Egg Food Safety Scheme
 - Microbiological quality of raw egg dressing
 - 4 hour/2 hour rule
- Food Standards Code (e.g. general food handling requirements, premises and equipment requirements, and labelling requirements)

About the NSW Food Authority: The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by providing information about and regulating the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation 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).