

# Food risk and you

## What to eat with a weakened immune system

Food safety matters for everyone, but it's especially important for people with weakened immune systems due to illness, medication, or age (65+).

You can lower your risk of foodborne illness by choosing and preparing food safely. Below are common food risks – and how to avoid them.

### Fruits and vegetables



Food	Form	Risk	How to reduce the risk
Salads	Home-made	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash ingredients well before making and eating.</li> <li>Store leftover salad in the fridge. Use within 1 day.</li> </ul>
	Store bought salads, including fruit salad	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Do not eat</b> pre-made salads from salad bars and smorgasbords.</li> <li>Follow the 'wash before use' instructions for bagged salads.</li> </ul>
Fruit	Whole fresh fruit	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash well before eating.</li> <li>If making cut fruit dishes, such as fruit salad, keep the shelf life short, no more than 2 days.</li> </ul>
	Rockmelon	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not buy bruised or damaged melons.</li> <li>If buying cut melon, ensure it has been kept cold.</li> <li>Wash hands before and after handling.</li> <li>Use a clean cutting board that is not used for raw meat or poultry.</li> <li>Refrigerated within 2 hours of peeling or cutting.</li> <li>Throw away leftovers if left at room temperature for more than 2 hours.</li> </ul>
Veggies and herbs	Fresh	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash well just before eating or cooking.</li> </ul>
	Frozen	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always cook and follow packet instructions.</li> <li>Never add raw frozen vegetables to salads.</li> </ul>
Bean sprouts	All sprouts, such as alfalfa, broccoli, onion, sunflower, clover, radish, snowpea, mung beans and soybean	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Never eat</b> raw or lightly cooked sprouts, and do not add as garnishes.</li> <li>Always cook before eating.</li> </ul>

# Meat, poultry and seafood



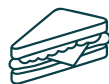
Food	Form	Risk	How to reduce the risk
Sliced deli meat	Ham, salami, luncheon meat, chicken meat	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat unless thoroughly cooked to at least 75°C (for example, on a cooked pizza, or in a ham and cheese toasted sandwich) and eaten soon afterwards.</li> <li>A safer option is packaged slice meats - follow the label shelf-life instructions. Eat within 5 days of opening, even if shelf life has not yet been reached.</li> </ul>
Raw meat	Any raw meat, for example poultry, beef, pork, lamb	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat raw meat.</li> </ul>
Cooked meat	Beef, pork, mince	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cook thoroughly to at least 71°C (medium) and eat while hot.</li> </ul>
Poultry	Home-cooked	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure chicken is cooked thoroughly to at least 74°C (juices must run clear) and eat while hot.</li> <li>Store any leftovers in the fridge and reheat until steaming hot (at least 60°C).</li> <li>Use within 3 days of cooking.</li> </ul>
	Hot takeaway chicken	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase freshly cooked and eat while hot.</li> <li>Store any leftovers in the fridge and reheat until steaming hot (at least 60°C).</li> <li>Use leftovers within 3 days.</li> </ul>
	Cold chicken or turkey in sandwich bars	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat cold chicken or turkey used in sandwich bars.</li> <li>A safer option is home-cooked chicken that has been cooled in the fridge and eaten within 3 days.</li> </ul>
	Stuffing (poultry)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat unless cooked separately and eaten hot.</li> <li>Ensure stuffing is cooked thoroughly.</li> </ul>
Pate	Refrigerated pate or meat spreads	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat refrigerated pate or meat spreads.</li> <li>A safer option is canned pate or meat spreads. Refrigerate after opening and follow the label instructions for shelf life after opening.</li> </ul>
Seafood	Raw seafood	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat raw seafood.</li> </ul>
	Chilled cooked prawns	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat chilled cooked prawns.</li> <li>A safer option is to purchase raw prawns (including frozen ones from the supermarket) to cook at home. Chill immediately after cooking thoroughly and eat within 2 days.</li> </ul>
	Cooked fish and seafood	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cook thoroughly to at least 63°C and eat while hot.</li> <li>Store leftovers in the fridge and reheat until steaming hot (at least 60°C).</li> <li>Use leftovers within 1 day.</li> </ul>
Sushi	Store bought	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat store bought pre-made sushi.</li> <li>A safer option is to purchase freshly made sushi (no raw fish) and eat within 4 hours.</li> </ul>
	Home-made	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not use raw meat or raw seafood in the sushi.</li> <li>Eat home-made sushi immediately.</li> </ul>

# Dairy and eggs



Food	Form	Risk	How to reduce the risk
Cheese	Hard cheese, such as cheddar, tasty cheese	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Store in the fridge.</li> </ul>
	Processed cheese, such as cheese spreads, cottage cheese, cream cheese	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Store in the fridge and eat within 2 days of opening.</li> </ul>
	Soft and semi-soft cheese, such as brie, camembert, ricotta, fetta bocconcini, blue	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat unless thoroughly cooked to at least 75°C (for example, on cooked pizza or in cooked pasta sauce) and eaten soon afterwards.</li> <li>Purchase commercially-packaged items in small amounts.</li> <li>Open promptly after purchase and eat in one sitting. Never leave out of the fridge for more than 2 hours.</li> </ul>
Ice cream	Packaged frozen ice cream	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep and eat frozen.</li> </ul>
	Soft serve	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat soft serve ice cream.</li> </ul>
	Fried ice cream	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat fried ice cream.</li> </ul>
Dairy	Unpasteurised (raw)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not drink or use.</li> </ul>
	Pasteurised, such as milk, cream, yoghurt	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check 'best before' or 'use by' date.</li> <li>Follow storage instructions.</li> </ul>
Custard	Store bought	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be eaten cold if freshly opened.</li> <li>Store in fridge and use within 1 day of opening.</li> <li>Reheat leftovers until steaming hot (at least 60°C).</li> <li>Check 'best before' or 'use by' date.</li> </ul>
	Home-made	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cook thoroughly to at least 71°C and eat hot.</li> <li>Store in the fridge.</li> <li>Use within 1 day of making and reheat leftovers until steaming hot (at least 60°C).</li> </ul>
Eggs	In store bought non-refrigerated products, such as mayonnaise, aioli	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check 'best before' or 'use by' date.</li> <li>Follow storage instructions.</li> </ul>
	Cooked egg dishes, such as fried eggs, scrambled eggs, quiche	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cook thoroughly to at least 71°C - until the white is set and the yolk has started to thicken.</li> <li>Do not use cracked or dirty eggs.</li> <li>Store eggs in their carton in the fridge. Follow the best before date on the carton.</li> <li>Wash hands well before and after handling eggs.</li> </ul>
	Raw egg in food, for example home-made mayonnaise, aioli, chocolate mousse, cake batter	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not eat food containing raw egg.</li> </ul>

## Other foods



Food	Form	Risk	How to reduce the risk
Leftovers	Cooked foods	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store leftovers covered in the fridge.</li> <li>• Eat within 3 days.</li> <li>• Always reheat until steaming hot (at least 60°C).</li> </ul>
	Cooked rice and pasta	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cool quickly and store in the fridge as soon as it has stopped steaming.</li> <li>• Eat within 2 days and only reheat once - throw away any leftovers.</li> <li>• Leftovers can be frozen. Defrost in the fridge or microwave as needed.</li> </ul>
Opened canned foods	Tinned fruit, vegetables, fish	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store unused portions in the fridge in clean, sealed containers.</li> <li>• Use within 3 days.</li> <li>• Follow the pack instructions for storage after opening.</li> </ul>
Hummus, tahini and any other sesame paste	Store bought or home-made	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do not eat</b> hummus, tahini or any other sesame paste.</li> </ul>
Soy	All soy products, such as tofu, soy milk, soy yoghurt	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check 'best before' or 'use by' date.</li> <li>• Follow storage instructions.</li> </ul>
Sandwiches	Pre-prepared or pre-packaged sandwiches or wraps	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do not eat</b> pre-prepared or packaged sandwiches.</li> <li>• A safer option is freshly made sandwiches - be careful with filling choices.</li> </ul>



Scan to find more about food safety with low immunity.

### More information

- Visit [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)
- Contact the Food Authority helpline:
  - Email [food.contact@dpird.nsw.gov.au](mailto:food.contact@dpird.nsw.gov.au)
  - Phone 1300 552 406 (8:30am - 5:30pm NSW business days)

This resource was created through a collaborative effort with NSW Health.