

Food safety—Salmonella

Advice to food businesses about egg safety for vulnerable people

Recent foodborne illness outbreaks have been associated with foods that have been prepared using raw and lightly cooked eggs and egg products. Examples of foods that contain raw or lightly cooked egg include mayonnaise, aioli, scrambled eggs, custard, cheesecake, eggnog, deep fried ice-cream and mousse.



Never use cracked or dirty eggs in the preparation of food. Dirty eggs may have harmful *Salmonella* bacteria on the shell. Cracked eggs allow *Salmonella* to enter and grow inside the egg. However even eggs with clean, uncracked shells can pose a risk if handled incorrectly.

Cross contamination can also occur when handling eggs and equipment and benches should be cleaned and sanitised to avoid contamination of ready-to-eat foods.

Raise
awareness of
Salmonella



Salmonella

Salmonella is the most commonly reported bacteria responsible for foodborne illness outbreaks and is usually associated with eggs and egg products. *Salmonella* infection causes gastroenteritis (commonly known as 'gastro') and symptoms can include headache, fever, stomach cramps, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting which can last days or weeks.



Remember

Only use raw eggs in dishes that are thoroughly cooked or cook eggs until both the yolk and the white are firm.

High risk population



Anyone can be affected by *Salmonella* but certain people are at greater risk of severe illness including older adults (over 60 years), pregnant women, young children (under 5 years) and people with weakened immune systems. Eating raw eggs, eggs with runny yolks or food that contains raw or lightly cooked egg can cause food poisoning, especially those in the 'at risk group'.

When catering for 'at risk groups', businesses should avoid preparing and serving food that contains raw or lightly cooked eggs such as scrambled eggs and egg based salad dressing and desserts. It is recommended that these businesses only use pasteurised egg and egg products to minimise the risk of foodborne illnesses from raw egg product.



Remember

It is recommended that businesses catering for the 'at risk group' only use pasteurised egg or egg products. This will prevent cross contamination from raw eggs and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Egg safety

DO NOT wash eggs

Washing eggs allows *Salmonella* bacteria to move from the outside of the shell to inside the egg. Never wash any eggs and throw away all dirty eggs.

Storage of raw eggs and egg products

Egg and egg products should be stored under refrigeration to minimise the risk of harmful *Salmonella* bacteria growing.

Store eggs in their original carton and do not use eggs that are 'out of date'.



Remember

It is important never to leave foods that contain raw egg out of the fridge for any longer than four hours in total. If not consumed within a day, throw it out.

Separating eggs

To minimise cross contamination egg shells should not be used to separate the egg white from the yolk as *Salmonella* bacteria on the surface of the shell can be transferred to the contents of the egg. Separating eggs using bare hands is also a risk as hands may become contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria, resulting in cross contamination.

Businesses should use a clean and sanitised egg separator to reduce the risk of any *Salmonella* bacteria present on the shell contaminating the egg yolk or egg white.



Ensure high hygiene standards



Handling of raw eggs and egg products

The following precautions should be taken when handling eggs:

- wash hands before and after handling eggs and avoid unnecessary handling of eggs
- minimise the contact between the shell and egg contents when breaking eggs
- ensure utensils, equipment and other food contact surfaces such as benches are cleaned and sanitised after handling eggs and egg products
- use a clean separate container for each batch of raw egg product and only refill the container once it has been cleaned and sanitised.



Remember

Hands should be washed and dried before and after handling eggs.



Cross contamination

Food businesses need to ensure there is no cross contamination between eggs or egg products and other food items. Equipment that has been used to prepare egg products such as stick blenders, mixers, food processors and chopping boards must be cleaned and sanitised prior to use with a dishwasher or chemical sanitiser. Blenders, mixers and processors must be dismantled to allow proper cleaning of internal parts.



Further information

Contact your local government:

[www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/local-government/
local-government-directory](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/local-government/local-government-directory)

www.health.qld.gov.au