

High Risk Foods

Potentially hazardous foods includes:

- Raw and cooked meat, or foods containing meat such as casseroles, curries and lasagne
- Dairy products such as milk, custard, dairy-based desserts
- Seafood
- Processed or cut fruits and vegetables
- Cooked rice and pasta
- Foods containing eggs, beans, nuts or other protein rich food such as quiche and soy products
- Foods that contain any of the above foods including sandwiches and rolls.

While care should be taken when handling all potentially hazardous foods, there are some foods or cooking methods that are considered particularly 'risky'. Food businesses must follow the NSW Food Authority's guidelines and recommendations for handling these high risk foods.

Sous Vide Food



'Sous vide' is French for 'under vacuum'. It means cooking food under vacuum, in sealed pouches at precise and sometimes low temperature.

There are potential risks in with Sou Vide:

- Food held in the temperature danger zone for extended period of time is at risk of bacterial growth
- Food in refrigeration for an extended time is at risk of cold-tolerant bacteria
- Food cooked at low temperatures for short periods of time will essentially remain raw and disease causing bacteria and parasites may survive.

Reduce risks by:

- Preparing thinner portions so heating and cooling are rapid
- Using water bath temperature at least 55°C so bacterial growth is prevented

- Holding food below 54.5°C for no more than 6 hours
- Checking water and or food temperatures using a calibrated tip-sensitive digital thermometer accurate to 0.1°C
- Not storing prepared food for extended periods of time
- Not cooking large portions of meat for extended times at low temperatures

Raw and Uncooked Hamburger Patties

Raw and undercooked hamburger patties are likely to contain harmful bacteria that can cause foodborne illness such as pathogenic strains of *E.coli*. In the USA, it has been common practice for some time to serve undercooked hamburgers and this has resulted in a number of outbreaks of *E.coli*. In Australia, it is still an emerging trend.

Minced meat used in hamburger patties must be carefully cooked throughout to destroy bacteria. With minced meat, the process of mincing makes the meat more vulnerable to bacteria. The outside ends up on the inside and bacteria is spread throughout the mince. Whereas a steak remains relatively intact and the bacteria remain on the outside (if stored under temperature control) therefore only the outside surface needs to be thoroughly cooked. This is why you can have a rare steak and still be safe!! Thorough cooking of hamburger patties and minced meat can avoid food poisoning.

Sushi and Sashimi

Ready to eat sushi is regarded as potentially hazardous food. Therefore it must be stored and displayed at 5°C or less or the food businesses can demonstrate the use of the 2 Hour / 4 hour Rule. However, there is an exemption which allows food businesses to display sushi at temperatures greater than 5°C for no more than 4 hours, provided that they comply with the following:



- Proper acidification of the rice (to a pH of less than or equal to 4.6) takes place to inhibit growth of food poisoning bacteria. The pH must be recorded;

- Implement a system for monitoring the length of time sushi can be displayed at greater than 5°C.
- Sushi is never displayed at temperatures above 25°C.

This exemption is based on scientific testing conducted by NSW Food Authority. The food business must comply with all three requirements above to meet the exemption. If all three cannot be met, then the business must store sushi under temperature control or comply with the 2hr / 4hr rule.

Raw Eggs Products

This includes food products that include raw eggs with no further pathogen reducing step (i.e. cooking):



- Sauces and spreads such as mayonnaise, aioli, hollandaise and egg butter;
- Desserts made without a cooking step, such as cheesecake, tiramisu and mouse;
- Lighting cooked foods, such as custard, fried ice-cream, some ice-cream and gelato made on the premises; and
- Drinks such as eggnog and egg flip.

Raw eggs products can cause Salmonella food poisoning. Extra precautions need to be taken by food businesses to prevent food poisoning outbreaks of Salmonella.

To avoid food poisoning, businesses can:

- Avoid raw eggs by using commercially made sauces and dressings;
- Use alternatives to raw eggs (such as pasteurised eggs);
- Acidifying raw egg products to reduce bacterial growth.

Refer to NSW Food Authority's Food Safety Guideline for the Preparation of Raw Egg Products:

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/rp/safe-use-of-raw-egg-products>

More information:

Refer to NSW Food Authority's website:

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au>

Alternatively, contact Council and ask to speak to the Environmental Health Officer.