

Safe Use of Raw Egg Products

Some of the largest foodborne illness outbreaks in NSW have been associated with foods made from raw eggs including:

- 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 egnog and egg flip.

The use of raw egg products is a major concern and restaurants, cafes, bakeries and caterers need to follow safe handling practices or use a safer alternative to avoid harming customers. The disease-causing organism Salmonella may be found on the shell surfaces of whole eggs which then contaminate food during the handling and preparation process. Outbreaks harm customers and can severely impact the reputation and trade prospects of a business.

Use safer alternative:

Safer alternatives to raw eggs in foods which are not cooked include:

- Commercially produced dressings, sauces and spreads instead of making raw egg products; or
- use pasteurised egg pulp in foods that traditionally contain raw eggs:
 - liquid, frozen or dried forms of processes whole eggs, egg whites and egg yolks;
 - sugared egg yolk (for desserts);
 - salted egg yolk (for mayonnaise, dressings and sauces).

Requirements for raw egg products:

If a food businesses decides to continue to make raw egg products, they must take extra precautions or risk compliance action from their local Council.

In order to prevent growth of Salmonella, it is important to:

- Acidify the raw egg product to a pH at or below 4.2 – this can be done using vinegar or lemon juice;
- Check the pH of the acidified raw egg product with a pH meter or pH paper;
- Keep acidified raw egg products at or below 5°C;
- Make the acidified raw egg product fresh daily in small tubs, not in bulk; and
- Discard acidified raw egg product within 24 hours of making it

Other requirements include:

- Only purchase and receive whole eggs which are clean, not cracked or leaking and supplied in clean packaging;
- Store whole eggs at or below 5°C and use by the best before date;
- Clean and sanitise 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;
- Use a sanitised egg separator to separate eggs, do not use the egg shell as the shell could be contaminated with Salmonella; and
- Wash hands before and after handling eggs.

More information:

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>

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