

## Federation Food Safety News – May 2018

Welcome to Federation Council's first food safety newsletter. It aims to provide food safety information, news and advice to food businesses on a quarterly basis.

### Raw Eggs Products – It's not worth the Risk!

There have been many large foodborne illness outbreaks associated raw egg food products that do not undergo a pathogen reduction step (such as cooking) prior to serving. Raw egg food products include:

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



If you are making raw egg products and not taking extra precautions, it could be just be a matter of time before you make someone seriously ill and damage your reputation.

Don't take the risk! Use alternatives to raw eggs products such as commercially produced dressings and sauces, or pasteurised egg products. Egg dressings and sauces made with pasteurised egg pulp are safer than those made from raw eggs. Pasteurisation kills disease causing organisms such as Salmonella.

If you decide you want to continue to make raw egg foods, special attention must be given to the safe production of these products to avoid the growth of Salmonella, including:

- Acidify raw egg products using vinegar or lemon juice (a pH of 4.2 or below must be achieved);
- Store acidified egg products under temperature control (at or below 5°C);
- If not used within 24 hours, discard the acidified egg product;
- Only receive and use whole eggs that are clean, not cracked or leaking and supplied in clean packaging;
- Whole eggs should be refrigerated at or below 5°C before being used

- They should be used by their 'best before' date;
- Practise good hygiene such as hand washing and sanitisation of food preparation surfaces.

It may take more time however it will give you peace of mind and prevent your customers from Salmonella.

If you make raw egg food products, you must be able to demonstrate to the EHO during your inspection that you are taking extra precautions and have the records to demonstrate that you are acidifying your raw egg product. For more information read the NSW Food Authority 'Food Safety Guidelines for the Preparation of Raw Egg Products' at:

[www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/rp/safe-use-of-raw-egg-products](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/rp/safe-use-of-raw-egg-products)

### Langham Hotel Melbourne – 90 people ill, 16 hospitalised

An outbreak of Salmonella food poisoning at



Melbourne's exclusive Langham Hotel in 2015 was caused by raw egg mayonnaise. A pregnant women holding a baby shower at the hotel's high tea, was among those struck down with poisoning. Doctors were forced to deliver the woman's baby 5 weeks early and the newborn suffered breathing

problems as a result. In total 90 people became ill and 16 people were hospitalised. Investigations by the Department of Health revealed that the same strain of Salmonella that people were struck down with was found in the mayonnaise. Eggs were sourced from a reputable and certified supplier however following the outbreak, the hotel took immediate steps to only use pasteurised eggs in all cooking processes and ceased making their own raw egg mayonnaise.

### Cleaning vs Sanitising – There's a Difference

Cleaning is the process used to remove food, dirt and grease from crockery, utensils, surfaces and equipment. Cleaning is done using detergent, however it doesn't kill bacteria or pathogens that cause food poisoning. To kill bacteria and ensure a hygienic kitchen, you must follow cleaning with sanitising.



Sanitising kills germs and bacteria and is required for all surfaces and equipment that have direct contact with food. Sanitising is done using either steam, hot water (over 77°C) or a chemical sanitiser.

Commercial dishwashers will reach appropriate temperatures and holding times to effectively sanitise crockery, utensils, pots and pans. For items that do not fit in the dishwasher and for food preparation benches and cooking equipment, a chemical sanitiser should be used. You can purchase food grade chemical sanitiser from most catering and chemical supply companies.

Steps involved in cleaning and sanitising crockery and equipment:

1. Scrape to remove excess food.
2. Rinse with clean warm to hot water to remove food particles.
3. Use detergent with warm or hot water to remove remaining grease or food particles.
4. Rinse again to remove detergent.
5. Sanitise with a chemical sanitiser (following product instructions, correct dilution rates and minimum holding times).
6. Final rinse with warm to hot running water to remove traces of the chemical sanitiser.
7. Air dry, do not use tea towels or cloths to dry items as they can carry high levels of bacteria.



### Listeria Outbreak

There has been a lot in the news about the rockmelon Listeria outbreak. The outbreak has caused 6 deaths and one miscarriage in NSW & VIC with a total of 19 people falling ill. However, there is currently no risk with rockmelons on sale now. The responsible farm has been identified and infected rockmelons being withdrawn from sale and distribution.

Listeria cases are few and uncommon in healthy people. But it can be very serious for the following people considered at risk:

- Pregnant women, their unborn and newborn children. It can lead to miscarriage, premature birth and in rare cases stillbirth in pregnant women
- Old people (over 65-70 years)

- People who have cancer or weakened immune systems
- People who have diabetes

Precautions include:

- Eat freshly cooked and freshly prepared foods
- Cook foods thoroughly
- Reheat foods to 'steaming' hot
- Avoid foods past their use by and best before dates
- Good hygiene such as washing hands
- Keep foods cold at 5°C or less
- Separate raw meats and ready-to-eat foods

High risk foods to be wary of if you are considered at risk include:

- Cold meats, cold cooked chickens
- Pate and meat spreads
- Pre-prepared or packaged salads
- Chilled seafood
- Soft, semi soft and surface ripened cheeses (i.e. brie, camembert, feta, blue)
- Soft serve ice-cream and unpasteurised dairy products
- Sprouted seeds/bean sprouts

Listeria is one of the few pathogens that can grow in the refrigerator, so ready to eat food should never be stored in the fridge too long.

*How can rockmelons become contaminated on the farm?*

Listeria is widely found in environment. On farms, sources of contamination include irrigated waters, wash waters and soil. Listeria can survive for up to 84 days in some soils. Heavy rains on a crop can splash listeria from soils onto the surface or skin of the vegetable or fruit, causing contamination. That's why it is important to employ safe food handling practices.



### New Food Safety Website

Federation Council is proud to launch its new food safety website. There is a suite of factsheets, food safety records and information available for local food businesses. Visit the food safety page at:

<https://www.federationcouncil.nsw.gov.au/Environment-Waste/Public-Health/Retail-Food-Businesses>