

Guide for food businesses

Safe preparation of raw egg products

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Restaurants, cafés, bakeries and caterers that prepare raw egg products need to follow safe handling practices or use a safer alternative

What is a raw egg product?

Raw egg products are ready-to-eat foods that contain raw egg and have not been processed to reduce bacteria levels to safe levels. This includes foods that contain raw egg and are not heated to 75 °C or equivalent when undergoing a light cooking process, such as hollandaise sauce or fried ice cream.

Foods that contain eggs need extra care

Products with raw eggs have been responsible for some of the largest foodborne illness outbreaks in Victoria. This is because the disease-causing organism, *Salmonella*, may be found on the shell surfaces of whole eggs which then contaminate the food, or cross contaminate other food.

Outbreaks harm customers and can severely impact the reputation and trade prospects of a business.

Foodborne illness has been associated with:

- egg dressings, sauces and spreads (for example, mayonnaise, aioli, egg butter)
- desserts made without an effective cooking step (for example, tiramisu, mousse, fried ice cream)
- drinks containing raw eggs (for example, raw egg high protein smoothies, cocktails).

Use safer alternatives

Businesses should use safer alternatives to raw eggs in foods which are not cooked to reduce the risk of foodborne illness by:

- using commercially produced dressings, sauces and spreads
- using pasteurised egg products when preparing ready-to-eat products (products without a further cook step) such as desserts and drinks.

If a business chooses to use raw egg products, there must be steps in place to ensure the food is safe.

Steps to make sure raw egg products are safe to eat

To prevent the growth of *Salmonella* and ensure food is safe to eat, special attention must be given to the preparation, storage and handling of eggs and egg products.

Receiving eggs

Only purchase and receive whole eggs that are:

- clean, not cracked or leaking
- supplied in clean packaging
- correctly labelled (such as, with the supplier's name and address, and lot identification or date marking)
- stamped with the producer's unique identifier as required. In Victoria, stamping is required for chicken eggs where the producer has more than 50 birds¹
- from a business, or egg producer, that can supply safe and suitable eggs
- recorded as a food supplier in your food safety program.

Storage and temperature control of raw egg product

- Whole eggs should be refrigerated at or below 5 °C, and used by the 'best-before' date.
- Keep all raw egg products at or below 5 °C.
- Make raw egg product fresh every day in small tubs, not in bulk.
- Discard any raw egg product within 24 hours.

Safer egg alternatives are available

- Consider using pasteurised egg pulp for foods that traditionally contain raw eggs:
 - liquid, frozen or dried forms of processed whole eggs, egg whites and egg yolks
 - sugared egg yolk (for desserts)
 - salted egg yolk (for mayonnaise, dressings and sauces).

Acidify savoury egg products using vinegar or lemon juice

Acidification can help stop the growth of *Salmonella* in savoury egg products. Do this by:

- using vinegar or lemon juice to ensure the pH of the product is at or below 4.2
- acidifying the eggs before undertaking the next steps of the recipe
- checking and recording the pH of the acidified raw egg product with a pH meter or pH paper.

Separating egg yolk from egg white

If *Salmonella* is present on the egg shell, it could be spread throughout the kitchen and onto other foods by your hands. To minimise contact between the egg shell and contents:

- wash and dry hands before and after handling eggs
- use a sanitised egg separator
- do not separate eggs using bare hands
- do not separate eggs using the egg shell
- do not store liquid raw eggs.
- once whole eggs are cracked, use them immediately.

¹ <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/poultry-and-eggs/poultry-legislation-regulations-and-standards/food-safety-for-egg-producers/food-safety-for-egg-producers-incorporating-the-food-safety-management-statement>

Sanitation and hygiene

- Clean and sanitise kitchen equipment before and after each use.
- Clean and sanitise storage containers and dressings/sauce dispensers between each batch.
- Do not top up dressings and sauces with fresh batches.
- Use separate containers for each batch of food.
- Keep kitchen surfaces and utensils clean and dry.
- Do not wash eggs as this makes them susceptible to further contamination.

Food laws

The food laws in Australia prohibit the sale of eggs with dirty or cracked shells because this increases the risk of contamination and foodborne illness.

- 'Dirty eggs' are eggs whose shell is contaminated with visible faeces, soil or other matter (for example, yolk, albumen, feathers)
- 'Cracked eggs' are those eggs with a cracked shell (where a crack is visible to the naked eye) or is broken.

To protect customers from the risk of foodborne illness, businesses need to comply with the [Food Standard 3.2.2](#), Division 3, Clause 7 (available at: www.foodstandards.gov.au) to ensure that only safe and suitable food is used.

More information

- Visit the Food Safety [website](#) at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/publications-guides-resources> to learn more about the following:
 - egg safety awareness
 - egg safety – food businesses
 - food safety program template for class 2 retail and food service businesses no. 1 version 3.
- Food Standards Code: Standard 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 for general food handling requirements, premises, equipment and labelling requirements, and Standard 4.2.5 – Primary Production and Processing Standard for Eggs and Egg Products for safe egg production.
- Phone the Food Safety Unit hotline: 1300 364 352 or email: foodsafety@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 364 352, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email foodsafety@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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