



# FOOD UNIT NOTICE

## **SUBJECT: Safe Handling of Eggs and Products Containing Eggs**

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### **Distribution of Notice:**

Food industry and *Food Act 2008* enforcement agencies.

### **Purpose:**

To ensure food businesses are aware of the risks that should be managed when handling food products that contain eggs.

### **Actions:**

It is recommended food businesses consider safer alternatives to raw eggs, including:

- Using commercially prepared mayonnaise, aioli or similar sauces that contain egg products; or
- Substituting raw egg with pasteurised eggs in foods which are not subject to a pathogen control step.

Pasteurised egg products including egg yolks, liquid egg whites and liquid whole eggs are readily available in Western Australia.

If a food business chooses to manufacture products that contain raw eggs, the associated risks must be properly identified and managed, and suitable processing controls implemented.

### **Background:**

Salmonella is the principal microorganism of human health concern associated with the consumption of eggs and egg products. There is a potential risk of illness from consumption of raw or lightly-cooked eggs, or consumption of uncooked foods containing raw egg.

Unhygienic practices used by food handlers during preparation of food containing egg have been reported as contributing factors to the risk of salmonellosis.

## Products containing raw or lightly cooked eggs\*:

Several products may contain raw or lightly cooked eggs which include:

- Mayonnaise, aioli and dressings
- egg butter
- raw egg based sauces
- milkshakes/egg nogs
- fried ice cream
- mousses, tiramisu and other desserts containing raw egg.

A food business must ensure that food products containing raw egg either:

- are prepared using pasteurised egg products; or
- implement procedures that ensure the microbial safety of the finished product.

## Cross contamination considerations:

When storing and handling eggs, food businesses must manage risks when handling and preparing other primary products such as raw chicken, meat, seafood and salad ingredients.

Being an animal sourced food, eggs can come into contact with faecal matter during primary production. This microbiological risk and other risks are managed in Standard 4.2.5 of the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code) by egg producers and processors.

Standard 2.2.2 of the Code prohibits the sale of cracked or dirty (unacceptable) eggs. The Standard also requires that eggs are to be individually marked with the producer's unique identifier (stamp).

When handling and storing eggs, food businesses should:

- Ensure food handlers wash and dry hands before and after handling eggs
- Ensure equipment and food contact surfaces are cleaned and sanitised before and after use
- Store eggs at 5°C (and avoid keeping eggs above 15°C) and minimise the amount of time eggs are kept above 5°C during preparation
- Follow the storage conditions on egg packaging (if present), minimise temperature fluctuations and only take out the number of eggs required for service
- Only using clean and uncracked eggs which are within their use by / best before date coding
- Keep raw eggs separate from ready to eat food
- Minimise contact between the internal components of an egg and the shell, as there is a greater likelihood of *Salmonella* being found on the exterior of the shell
- When separating the egg yolk from the white, use a sanitised egg separator – not the egg shell or hands
- Store eggs in their original packaging. The packaging ensures that traceability and shelf life information remains with the product
- Not wash eggs prior to use – this could spread microorganisms

## Risk management:

To minimise the risks involved, food businesses should ensure that:

- Customers are able to be informed of whether a product contains raw or lightly cooked eggs so that they can make an informed decision about whether to consume the product
- Any food product manufactured using raw egg is disposed of if it has not been used within 24 hours of manufacture
- Different batches of product are kept in separate containers and are not mixed, including topping up the container with a new batch.
- Products containing egg are stored below 5°C at all times or if this is not practical (i.e. during food preparation), use alternative control methods such as recording information detailing the length of time the product has been out of temperature control to demonstrate compliance with the 2 hour/4 hour rule (Appendix 2 of [Safe Food Australia](#)).
- Sauces and dressings containing raw eggs should have a pH of 4.2 or less. The acid present in vinegar or lemon juice will lower the pH which inhibits or slows the growth of bacteria present, but it will not kill bacteria (Appendix 3 of [Safe Food Australia](#)). pH can be checked using a pH meter or pH paper.

## Information for enforcement agencies:

The Food Safety Standards – Chapter 3 of the Code – place a responsibility on food businesses to manage their food safety risks. The role of an authorised officer is to collect evidence from the food business to determine whether the food safety outcomes are being met and food safety is being adequately managed.

Food containing raw or lightly cooked eggs is potentially hazardous. Authorised officers should be assessing whether or not food businesses are adequately managing the risks involved in the use of egg – in particular compliance with the outcomes of clause 7 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Code if the food business is producing products containing eggs.

### 7 Food processing

(1) A food business must –

(a) take all practicable measures to process only safe and suitable food; and

(b) when processing food –

i. take all necessary steps to prevent the likelihood of food being contaminated; and

ii. where a process step is needed to reduce to safe levels any pathogens that may be present in the food – use a process step that is reasonably known to achieve the microbiological safety of the food.

(2) A food business must, when processing potentially hazardous food that is not undergoing a pathogen control step, ensure that the time the food remains at temperatures that permit the growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms in the food is minimised.

It is also of value for authorised officers to investigate the quality of eggs received and stored by the food business. Cracked and dirty eggs pose a serious risk to safe food production and should not be received or present in a food business. Eggs should only be purchased from reputable suppliers and be stamped.

*\*It should be noted some products that contain raw or lightly cooked egg have little or no history of causing salmonellosis. This includes cooked egg sauces, cakes and soufflés, meringues, icing, marshmallows and frozen desserts. This also applies to some cultural dishes incorporating raw egg such as tartare, congee and soups.*

### Examples of pasteurised egg products available in the market in WA

Company	Range of products	Form of products
<u>Farm Pride</u>	Whole eggs Egg whites Egg yolk Scrambled eggs Peeled boiled eggs Fried eggs Omelettes Crepes	Liquid (chilled/frozen) Powder
<u>Frutex</u>	Whole eggs Egg white albumen Egg white mix Egg yolk sugared	Liquid (frozen) Powder
<u>Golden Eggs</u>	Whole eggs	Liquid (chilled/frozen)
<u>Icon Foods</u>	Egg whites	Liquid (chilled)
<u>Pace Farm</u>	Whole eggs Egg white albumen Egg white mix Egg white powder (high whip) Egg yolk Scrambled eggs Peeled boiled eggs Fried eggs Omelettes	Liquid (chilled/frozen) Powder
<u>Sunny Queen</u>	Whole eggs Egg white albumen Egg white mix albumen Egg yolk sugared & reduced solid Omelettes Poached eggs Scrambled eggs Meal solutions (24 varieties of fritters, chopped eggs & baked eggs)	Liquid (chilled/frozen)

## Resources

WA Department of Health

- [Fact sheet standard 4.2.5 – Primary production and processing standard for eggs and egg products.](#)
- [Eggs \(consumer fact sheet\)](#)

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

- [Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements](#)
- [Safe Food Australia \(3<sup>rd</sup> Edition\) – including Appendix 4: Foods requiring special care](#)

NSW Department of Primary Industries Food Authority

- [Food Safety Guidelines for the Preparation of Raw Egg Products](#) (external website)
- [Safe Preparation of Raw Egg Products](#) (external website)

Australian Egg Corporation Limited

- [The Culinary Uses of Eggs](#) (external website)
- [Food Safety Advice - Eggs](#) (external website)

## More information

Contact your [local government](#) for further information

or

Contact the Food Unit

Email: [foodunit@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:foodunit@health.wa.gov.au)

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