



Food Safety: Eggs



It is not recommended that foods containing raw or lightly cooked eggs are consumed by young children, elderly people, pregnant women or anyone who's immune system has been weakened by disease or illness.

Eating out

Cafes, restaurants and other food businesses should be able to inform you if any of their products contain raw or lightly cooked eggs.

Commercially manufactured products containing egg products must be either be pasteurised, cooked or otherwise treated to ensure that they do not contain Salmonella.

What are egg products?

Egg products are considered to be the content of egg, as part or whole, in liquid, frozen or dried form, liquid whole egg, mixtures of liquid (includes egg yolk and liquid egg white, liquid egg yolk or liquid egg white).

For more information

Contact your local government
Environmental Health Officer

or

Food Unit
Environmental Health Directorate
PO Box 8172
Perth Business Centre WA 6849
Phone: (08) 9388 4999
Fax: (08) 9388 4955

This document can be made available in alternative formats such as computer disc, audio tape or Braille, on request.





The Department of Health recommends eating and enjoying a wide range of nutritious foods each day for good health. Eggs are a good source of nutrients and it is vital that people know how to prepare them safely. Eggs, like many other foods, can be contaminated with low levels of bacteria and need to be handled properly to avoid risks of food borne illness.

Why handle eggs safely?

- Broken, cracked or dirty eggs (with faeces or feathers from the hen) are more likely to contain bacteria (Salmonella) on the outside or the inside of the egg.
- Once inside the egg, Salmonella can multiply to large numbers which further increases the risk of illness. Such eggs may not necessarily smell or look 'off'.
- Salmonella on eggs may also contaminate other foods if they come into contact with other ready to eat foods or if you do not wash your hands before and after handling eggs (cross-contamination).
- Salmonella is killed by cooking over 65°C however illness can occur if the eggs are added to a food that won't be cooked (such as a dessert or a mayonnaise) or are lightly cooked ('runny' eggs).

When storing and handling eggs take the same precautions as you would when handling and preparing raw chicken, meat and seafood

Which eggs to buy?

- Buy eggs in cartons with supplier identification.
- Buy and use eggs prior to the date marking whether it is "Use By" or "Best Before".
- Buy eggs which are clean and free from visible dirt and feathers.
- NEVER buy eggs with cracks.
- Do not buy eggs for sale which have been stored in direct sunlight as heat shortens the shelf life.

How to store eggs?

- After purchasing, store eggs in refrigeration ($\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$) in their cartons or other egg container.
- Only store clean, uncracked eggs. Do not wash eggs as this will make the shell porous which makes it easier for bacteria to enter the egg.

How to prepare and cook eggs?

- Always wash your hands before and after handling eggs.
- NEVER use cracked or dirty eggs even if you are planning to cook them thoroughly.
- Refrigerate cooked eggs and dishes containing eggs which are not eaten immediately.
- Take care not to splash raw eggs onto other food, surfaces or utensils.

Can I use raw eggs in recipes?

It is impossible to guarantee the safety of consuming raw eggs and dishes that contain raw egg products which have not been pasteurised. Raw eggs may be used as an ingredient in products including home made sauces and dressings such as mayonnaise, aioli and hollandaise sauce, drinks such as egg nog and desserts such as mousses, tiramisu and home made icecream.

Pasteurised egg products should be used to make these products. Pasteurisation will kill Salmonella, but it does not cook or affect the colour, flavour, nutritional value, or use of eggs.

If unpasteurised egg products are used, the product should only be kept for a short period of time and either eaten immediately after preparing or kept $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ until it is to be consumed.