

Business Advisory Sheet 7

Salmonella and the Use of Raw Eggs and the Recommended Use of Pasteurised Egg

Raw eggs are a common source of [Salmonella](#), which can cause severe food poisoning and, in serious cases, even death.

The [Health Protection Agency](#) and [Food Standards Agency](#) advice is that people should “*avoid eating raw or uncooked food made from them such as mayonnaise, mousses or ice cream as well as raw eggs mixed into drinks*”. This is particularly important for children, the elderly and people who are already ill, who are much more vulnerable to infection. Some types of Salmonella are a particular problem because they are resistant to heat or acidity and can grow rapidly in products such as home made mayonnaise.

What are the risks involved in using shell eggs?

Shell eggs are often contaminated with Salmonella. There is a much greater risk of cracked or broken eggs being contaminated. The shells and packaging may be contaminated as well as the contents. Both clean and dirty eggs can carry Salmonella.

If eggs are not stored properly Salmonella can multiply increasing the risk of contamination.

Salmonella on the surface of eggs and on packaging can contaminate hands and protective clothing, and can be spread onto other food.

Cracking or whisking eggs can create airborne particles which can spread a considerable distance contaminating other foods or equipment.

When should raw eggs not be used?

Raw eggs should not be used for any of the following:-

- Making mayonnaise or ice cream
- As a binding for sandwich fillings
- Desserts such as tiramisu, zabaglione
- Baked Alaska, hollandaise sauce or other dishes where the egg is only lightly cooked
- Icing on cakes
- Drinks such as “egg nogg”

Salmonella and the Use of Raw Eggs (continued)

Delivery and Storage

- Eggs should be purchased from a reputable supplier and checked when they are delivered. Broken or cracked eggs or dirty packaging should be returned to your supplier or disposed of.
- Eggs should be stored in a refrigerator (preferably) or cool storeroom. They should be kept in their date labelled packs if they are not date marked on the shell.
- Set up a stock rotation system to make sure that all eggs are used before their date code expires.
- Do not wash or wipe eggs as this makes them more susceptible to contamination.
- Eggs should be used within half an hour after they have been removed from the refrigerator/cool storeroom.

Preparation

- Keep eggs away from other foods when they are still in the shell and when you have cracked them open.
- Don't use damaged or dirty eggs.
- Be careful not to splash raw egg onto other food, surfaces or dishes.
- Cook eggs and foods containing eggs thoroughly.
- Use pasteurised egg for raw or lightly cooked foods.
- Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly after touching eggs or working with them.
- Clean food areas, dishes and utensils thoroughly, using warm soapy water, after working with eggs.
- Serve egg dishes straightaway, or cool them quickly and keep chilled.

Can I be sure that an egg is salmonella-free?

It isn't possible to guarantee that any egg will be free from salmonella, whatever the source or brand, so you need to be careful how you handle all eggs. There is a smaller chance that eggs from vaccinated flocks will contain salmonella, but you should still take care. Remember, it's always better to buy your eggs from a reputable supplier.

How can I reduce the dangers if I use large numbers of eggs?

If you use lots of eggs, you should be especially careful to avoid cross-contamination.

Ideally, you should do all your work with raw eggs at one time. Remember that drips of egg and broken shells could spread bacteria. So you should dispose of the shells carefully and thoroughly clean surfaces, sinks, dishes and utensils before starting a different type of work. All staff should wash their hands with warm water and soap, and dry them thoroughly, after working with eggs.

Salmonella and the Use of Raw Eggs (continued)

What do food handlers need to know?

Food safety training should include the safe use of shell eggs. Hands should be washed before and after handling shell eggs or their packaging and soiled protective clothing should be changed before preparing ready to eat foods.

Hazard Analysis and Safe Methods

Hazard analysis systems and your safe methods should include information on the safe use of shell eggs.

What are the alternatives to shell eggs?

Many dishes such as mayonnaise, tiramisu and mousses have traditionally been made with shell eggs. Recent food poisoning outbreaks have shown that this is not safe. A suitable alternative is pasteurised liquid egg. This is widely available as whole egg, egg yolk and egg white in various sizes of container including 1 litre packs. A number of companies also supply frozen scrambled egg that simply needs to be microwaved before serving.

A list of local suppliers is available below.

Alternatively, good quality ready made products such as mayonnaise are widely available.

Recipes for such dishes as those listed above, which use raw egg, should be amended to specify the use of pasteurised liquid egg. In catering it is preferable to use pasteurised egg rather than shell egg for all eggs containing dishes, where possible.

Local suppliers of pasteurised eggs

Name	Address	Telephone Number
John Coulthurst	Kenyons Farm Gough Lane Bamber Bridge Preston	01772 623123
J A Hyman Limited	123/125 Waterloo Road Manchester	0161 792 1888
H N Nuttall Limited	Newton Moor Industrial Estate Hyde Tameside	0161 368 0331
BrakeBrothers	Unit 8, Tameside Park 5th Avenue Dukinfield	0161 252 7800

(Please note that inclusion or exclusion of suppliers does not infer endorsement or otherwise)

Salmonella and the Use of Raw Eggs (continued)

Where can I get more information?

Eggs and Salmonella, the facts. The British Eggs Industry Council.
Telephone 0207 370 7411 or visit <http://www.britegg.co.uk/>

Contact

For further advice/information please contact:
Oldham Council, Food Safety, Chadderton Town Hall, Middleton Road, Chadderton,
Oldham OL9 6PP on Telephone 0161 770 2244 or email env.foodsafety@oldham.gov.uk