

RAW EGG IN CAFE FOODBORNE ILLNESS CASE STUDY



Incident summary

In January 2017, a café was serving foods containing raw eggs (e.g. mayonnaise, shakes with raw eggs) which are very high risk for *Salmonella* poisoning.

Despite receiving advice on the risks of raw egg foods from an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) during an inspection on 7 December 2016, the café continued to serve these types of products.

In January 2017, NSW Health detected a salmonellosis increase in the local area, with at least 17 from 42 cases linked to consumption of food from the café.

Investigation summary

An investigation of the café on 20 January found:

- The business was still using raw egg foods, despite being provided with advice about the risks of doing so in December 2016.
- There was no system in place to monitor the pH of raw egg foods and ensure that each batch made daily reached a pH of 4.2 or less.
- Several food items, swabs of equipment, and other food contact surfaces were tested for the presence of *Salmonella*.
- One food item, an uncooked egg and cream mix for French toast, was positive for *Salmonella*.
- Several chopping boards and a metal mixing bowl that had been

cleaned were also positive for *Salmonella*.

- All *Salmonella* samples were a genetic match to human clinical samples implicated in the outbreak.
- A failure to adequately clean and sanitise utensils and food contact surfaces was a significant contributing factor in this outbreak.
- A mixer which had recently been cleaned was found to have significant food waste in a metal shaft. The equipment had not been sufficiently disassembled prior to cleaning.

Food safety implication

Raw egg foods are a significant risk for *Salmonella* poisoning as trace amounts of bacteria from the shell of an egg can be introduced into the product, which may not undergo any further processing.

Businesses should use a commercially pasteurised alternative, or follow appropriate guidelines for safe preparation to avoid being in breach of the Food Safety Standards (3.2.2, clause 7)



Failure to clean and sanitise food contact surfaces and equipment is one of the most common contributing factors in outbreaks. It is essential that businesses ensure all staff who have a role in hygiene know the difference between cleaning and sanitising, and can do both effectively.

The business was issued with 3 Penalty Notices with fines of \$880 each:

- Failure to clean and sanitise (chopping boards, mixing bowl with *Salmonella* detected),
- Failure to process food to remove pathogens (use of raw eggs in mayonnaise),
- Failure to clean equipment (a blade shaft from mixing equipment was visibly unclean).

In addition, the business was charged for follow up inspection fees and placed on the NSW Food Authority Name & Shame list.

What businesses should do

Be aware that food with raw eggs are high risk and use an alternative product (such as pasteurised mayonnaise) or follow the directions in the *Food Safety Guidelines for the Preparation of Raw Egg Products*.

Ensure that all equipment and surfaces are **cleaned** and **sanitised** appropriately, and that all staff within the business understand the importance of this

Ensure that staff understand how to disassemble and clean equipment effectively.

More information

Food Safety Guidelines for the Preparation of Raw Egg Products
http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retail/raw_egg_guidelines.pdf

Cleaning and sanitising in food businesses fact sheet
http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/industry/cleaning_sanitising_food_businesses.pdf

About the NSW Food Authority: The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by providing information about and regulating the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation of food.

Note: This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).



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