

## Eggs

Eggs are a good source of vitamins and minerals but like many other foods they can be contaminated with bacteria. It is important you handle and prepare eggs safely to reduce the risk of [food poisoning](#).

### Take care when buying eggs

- Buy eggs in cartons that clearly identify the supplier.
- Always buy and use eggs before their 'best before' or 'use-by' date.
- Eggs should be clean and free from visible dirt and feathers.
- Never buy eggs with cracks.
- Do not buy eggs which have been stored in direct sunlight as heat shortens their shelf life (the amount of time they are safe to eat).

### Handle eggs safely

Eggs that are broken, cracked or dirty (visible hen faeces (poo) or feathers) are more likely to contain the [Salmonella](#) bacteria. These bacteria can be on the shell as well as inside the egg, so you need to be careful how you handle eggs in their shell and after you have cracked them.

Once inside the egg, the *Salmonella* bacteria keep multiplying which further increases the risk of illness. It is important to remember that such eggs may not necessarily smell or look 'off'.

The *Salmonella* bacteria can also spread very easily. If you touch eggs, or get some egg white or yolk on your hands, you can spread the bacteria to anything else you touch. This includes other foods, cooking utensils and work surfaces, so it is important to wash and dry your hands thoroughly after handling eggs.

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

### Stop the bacteria spreading

- Keep eggs away from other foods when they are still in the shell and after you have cracked them.
- Be careful not to splash egg onto other foods, worktops or dishes.

- Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly after touching eggs or working with them.
- Clean surfaces, dishes and utensils thoroughly, using warm soapy water, after working with eggs.

## Raw eggs

Store eggs in their cartons or other egg container in the fridge at temperatures less than 5 °C.

Only store clean, uncracked eggs. Do not wash eggs as this can make it easier for bacteria to enter the egg.

## Can I use raw eggs in recipes?

Eggs may be an ingredient in:

- home made sauces such as mayonnaise, aioli and hollandaise sauce
- drinks such as eggnog
- desserts such as mousse, tiramisu and home made ice cream.

It is not recommended that foods containing raw or lightly cooked eggs are eaten by:

- young children
- elderly people
- pregnant women
- people with a weakened immune system.

If raw eggs are used in foods that are not cooked, the food or drink should be eaten immediately after it has been prepared or kept at a temperature lower than 5 °C for a maximum of 24 hours until consumed.

## Eating out

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

Commercially manufactured products containing egg products (part or all of an egg in liquid, frozen or dried form) must be either be pasteurised, cooked or otherwise treated to ensure that they do not contain *Salmonella* bacteria.

Using pasteurised egg products is a safer option than shell eggs for these products. The pasteurisation process will kill *Salmonella* bacteria, but it does not cook or affect the colour, flavour, nutritional value, or use of eggs.

## Cooking 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.

### Does cooking eggs kill *Salmonella* bacteria?

Yes, if you cook the eggs until both the white and yolk are solid. If you are cooking a dish containing eggs, make sure you cook it until the food is hot all the way through.

It is best to avoid any uncooked foods or dishes that contain raw egg. This is because it is impossible to guarantee the safety of eating raw eggs and dishes that contain unpasteurised raw egg products.

## More information

Contact the environmental health officer in your [local government area \(external site\)](#).

You can also contact the Food Unit at the Environmental Health Directorate 9388 4999.

## Remember

- Eggs contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria can cause food poisoning.
- Safe handling and preparation of eggs reduces the risk of food poisoning.
- Cooking eggs until both the white and yolk are solid will kill any *Salmonella* bacteria.
- Foods made with raw or lightly cooked eggs are not recommended for young children, elderly people, pregnant women and people who are already unwell.

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### Acknowledgements

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