

Advisory Note 9 The Safe Use Of Shell Eggs

Raw eggs are a common source of [Salmonella](#) which can cause severe food poisoning and in serious cases even death. (see also Advisory Note 6).

The Food Standards Agency's advice is that people should ***"avoid eating raw eggs 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. Dirty eggs are particularly likely to 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 be spread to other foods;
- 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, mousses;
- baked alaska, hollandaise sauce or other dishes where the egg is only lightly cooked;
- icing on cakes;
- drinks such as "egg nogg".

What are the alternatives to shell egg?

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. (see also Advisory Note 8) This is widely available as whole egg, egg yolk and egg white in various sizes of container including one litre packs. A number of companies also supply frozen scrambled egg which simply needs to be microwaved before serving.

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

Recipes for dishes such as those listed above, which use raw egg, should be amended to specify the use of pasteurised liquid egg.

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

- Shell eggs should be cracked or whisked in an area away from other food or clean equipment could become contaminated.
- Shells and packaging should be disposed of as soon as possible.
- Equipment and utensils which might have been contaminated should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Dishes containing raw egg should be cooked as soon as possible (also see advisory note 8).
- If glazed or binding containing raw eggs must be prepared in advance, they should be stored in the refrigerator.
- When batch boiling eggs it is important to ensure thorough distribution of heat by continually stirring during the boiling period.

Food Handler

- Food safety training should include the safe use of shell eggs (see advisory note 22).
- Hands should be washed before and after use of shell eggs or their packaging.
- Soiled protective clothing should be changed before preparing ready to eat foods.

Hazard Analysis

Hazard Analysis systems should include information on the safe use of shell eggs. A separate information sheet on Hazard Analysis is available from us (see advisory notes 20 & 21).

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/>

For further Advice/Information contact
Salford City Council
Environment Directorate, Turnpike House
631 Eccles New Road, Salford M5 2SH
Telephone: 0161 737 0551
Email: environment@salford.gov.uk