

It's Your Food

JULY 2024
A Newsletter for Food Businesses in Monash


Food Sampling

Each year, councils are required to take a set number of food samples. Recently, we focused on sampling sushi and sashimi to gain a better understanding of trends and practices within the industry.

Sushi and sashimi provides a myriad of options, and stand out as exquisite delicacies that epitomise the artistry of Japanese cuisine. Sushi, a culinary masterpiece, blends vinegared rice with ingredients like fresh seafood, vegetables, and sometimes tropical fruits, wrapped in seaweed. The diverse range of sushi, from traditional nigiri to creative rolls, showcases the fusion of flavours, colours, and taste.

Most of the food samples analysed complied with requirements. The non-compliant results highlighted the importance of personal hygiene practices when preparing and handling sushi and similar ready-to-eat foods. Frequent and thorough handwashing is important to reduce foodborne illness.

It was noted many food businesses were implementing the Department of Health Food Safety Program template. This template (version 1, 2 or 3) is no longer a registered template. Proprietors have an option to use the online standard FoodSmart Food Safety Program or a non-standard food safety program.

 **FoodSmart** is a department approved online food safety program template for Class 2 food businesses required to have a food safety program.

Food businesses are also welcome to use a non-standard food safety program created by a third party. This Food Safety Program will need to be audited by a Department of Health approved auditor each year.



A total of 48 sushi and sashimi products were sampled and 98% of these samples complied with Standards.

For more info, feel free to reach out to your Environmental Health Officer or visit:

 www.monash.vic.gov.au/Food-Premises

Can I allow dogs in my business?

An assistance animal is a guide dog or other animal trained to help a person with a disability (Section 9 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992).

By law, assistance animals are allowed into dining and drinking areas and other places used by customers, but they are not allowed in non-public areas, such as the kitchen.

Pet dogs are only permitted in outdoor dining/drinking areas that are not enclosed. If an outdoor open dining/drinking area is enclosed, even for a short time, such as using café blinds and a retractable awning in

winter, pet dogs are not allowed in it while it is enclosed.

The same requirement applies to home-based food businesses; pets are not allowed in food handling/preparation area such as kitchen and food storage area.



To keep food safe from animals you could:



- Install physical barriers to stop animals entering food handling areas (e.g. self-closing screen doors, child safety gates)
- Store food in secure room or cupboards
- When transporting food, make sure no pets are in the vehicle or place a physical barrier to protect the food from contamination.

More info: **Standard 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements**
www.foodstandards.gov.au

How to correctly cool cooked food

Food poisoning outbreaks have been linked to inadequate cooling processes.

While cooked potentially hazardous food is cooled, it spends time in what's known as the temperature danger zone (5°C-60°C).

This 'danger zone' can support the growth of food poisoning bacteria and toxins such as Salmonella and Bacillus cereus.

So, the less time food spends in the temperature danger zone, the less the harmful bacteria and toxins grow!

Cooling process

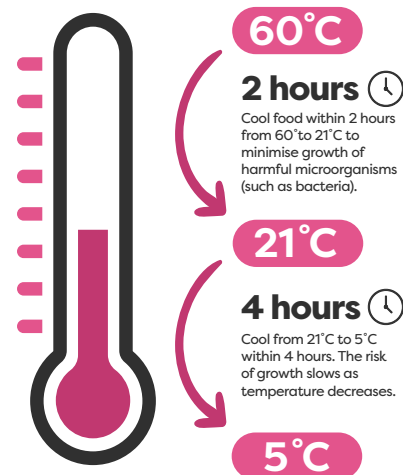
When cooling cooked food, ensure the internal temperature reduces from 60°C to 21°C in less than 2 hours, then from 21°C to 5°C in less than 4 hours.

The following advice is provided to assist with the cooling process:



- Use smaller, shallow containers
- Stir foods (ensure the utensil is clean and sanitary)
- Chill in ice water baths
- Place the food containers on the top shelf of the cool room (maximise air-flow)
- Do not stack
- Use your probe thermometer to ensure the time and temperature requirements are met.

COOLING PROCESS



Check with a sanitised digital thermometer probe.

Campylobacter

Campylobacter bacteria causes an infection of the gut known as campylobacteriosis.



What are the Symptoms?

People can experience diarrhoea, fever, stomach cramps, nausea and vomiting. Symptoms usually start five days after infection and generally last from 1 to 2 weeks. In rare cases, illness can be serious.

How is it spread?

- Eating contaminated or undercooked chicken, meat or unpasteurised milk
- Drinking contaminated water
- Via the hands of an infected person
- Cross-contamination of ready to eat food, through contact surfaces and equipment.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can be infected and become unwell. Infants, elderly and people with poor immune systems are more likely to develop serious illness.

How can it be prevented in your food business?



By practicing safe food handling and handwashing can prevent the spread of infection.

- Store raw foods (such as chicken and meat) in a sealed container on the bottom shelf of the fridge or freezer to avoid fluid dripping onto ready to eat food
- Cover foods in the fridge and freezer to protect them from contamination
- Use different coloured chopping boards (colour coded), trays, utensils and plates when preparing raw and cooked foods. If you have one chopping board, wash it well with soapy water and sanitise before and after use
- Thoroughly cook chicken and meat to a temperature of 75°C or until meat juices run clear and not pink
- Avoid washing raw chicken meat
- Wash your hands immediately after going to the toilet, handling raw foods and before handling cooked or ready to eat food
- Clean and sanitise all preparation surfaces and equipment before and after use
- Keep cold food below 5°C and hot food above 60°C.

PEAL – Plain English Allergen Labelling

In February 2021, Food Standards Australia New Zealand introduced new Plain English Allergen Labelling (PEAL) legislation as part of the Food Standards Code.

A three-year implementation period was included, giving businesses until 25 February 2024, to make the required changes.

PEAL requirements are now in effect, please ensure you meet all labelling requirements under the Food Standards Code.

A food allergy occurs when a person's immune system reacts to certain food and ingredients and can cause allergic reactions including anaphylaxis. Other immune reactions can also occur in response to food, such as in Coeliac disease.

Substances such as sulphites can also cause adverse health reactions for some people with asthma. This is why the Food Standards Code requires certain food and substances to be declared when present in food as ingredients, including food additives or processing aids.

These regulations are designed to introduce a simplified and consistent allergen labelling system nationwide.

PEAL legislation significantly changes how allergens are identified on food labels. It emphasises clarity and easy to understand allergen labelling, allowing consumers to make safer food choices.

This shift is not just regulatory, it's a major step towards more informed and health-conscious consumer decisions.

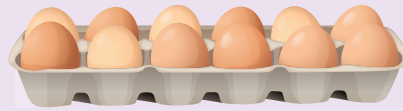
There is an additional two-year "stock-in-trade" period that allows businesses to sell products with non-compliant labels so long as the items in question were produced prior to 25 February 2024. After 25 February 2026, every food product sold must have a PEAL label.



More info:

[www.foodstandards.gov.au/
business/labelling/allergen-labelling](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/labelling/allergen-labelling)

Eggs and Salmonella



Foodborne illness caused by Salmonella has significantly increased over the past 20 years and more than 70% of salmonellosis is thought to be due to contaminated food, with mishandling of eggs and egg-based products being a significant contributor to foodborne illness.

Over the past two decades, cases of foodborne illness caused by Salmonella has significantly increased, with increased contaminated eggs and egg products in more than 70% of cases.

Salmonella is known to be present on the surface of eggs and improper handling can lead to raw egg products becoming contaminated.

There are several factors that contribute to the strong association between foodborne illness outbreaks caused by Salmonella and food that is sold which contains raw egg.

These include:

- Contamination of egg contents by Salmonella from the shell
- Failure to process raw egg foods sufficiently (through acidification or heat) to remove any Salmonella risk
- Failure to clean and sanitise equipment and food contact surfaces
- Temperature abuse of products (i.e. storage above 5°C)
- Keeping raw egg products beyond the recommended storage life (maximum 24 hours) at refrigerated temperature.

Egg safety Tips



To avoid giving your customers food poisoning from eggs follow these safety tips:

- Never buy or use cracked, damaged or dirty eggs
- Always store eggs in the fridge in their own cartons/ packaging
- When storing and handling eggs, take the same precautions as you would when handling and preparing raw chicken, meat, seafood or dairy products
- Always buy and use eggs before the best-before date
- Thoroughly clean your hands, food areas, work surfaces, dishes, utensils and cleaning cloths after working with eggs and especially after egg spills
- Use a sanitised egg separator to separate egg yolk from egg whites. Eggs must not be separated using their shells as the shells may be contaminated with Salmonella on the outside surface
- Serve hot dishes containing eggs straightaway, or cool them quickly in the fridge and keep refrigerated until eaten
- Cook eggs and foods containing egg until they are hot all the way through
- Use pasteurised egg products in foods that will not be cooked, or will only be lightly cooked. Alternatively, change to recipes that do not require raw eggs as an ingredient
- Include egg safety messages in food hygiene training for staff
- If a raw egg product such as hollandaise sauce or mayonnaise is out of temperature control (i.e. not at or below 5°C), documented evidence that the '2-hour/4-hour' rule is being met is required.

2-hour/4-hour rule

- When ready-to-eat food has been kept between 5°C and 60°C for up to 2 hours, it can be refrigerated below 5°C, or kept hot above 60°C, or used immediately
- Between 2 and 4 hours, it must be used immediately
- For up to a total of 4 hours or more, food must be thrown out.





Feeling unwell?

Ensuring food is safe enough to eat when preparing food is key.

By practicing good food and personal hygiene, this ensures food is not contaminated through foodborne illness. If you handle food and aren't feeling

well (flu like symptoms, gastro), to avoid contamination stop handling food and stay home until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.

More info: www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/food-safety/fact-sheets/health-and-hygiene-advice-for-food-handlers

The difference between cleaning and sanitising

Did you know cleaning and sanitising surfaces and utensils are separate processes? Surfaces need to be thoroughly cleaned before a sanitiser is applied.



Six steps for cleaning and sanitising food contact surfaces and equipment:



1 Pre-clean
scrape, wipe or sweep food scraps and rinse with water



2 Wash
use hot water and detergent to remove grease and food residue



3 Rinse
rinse off detergent and any loose residue



4 Sanitise
use a sanitiser to kill remaining germs



5 Final rinse
wash off sanitiser if necessary (refer to manufacturer's instructions)



6 Dry
allow to air dry

Sanitise: means to apply heat (usually very hot water), chemicals, or a combination of heat and chemicals, to a clean surface to reduce the numbers of bacteria and other organisms to a minimum level.

Chemical sanitisers: include quaternary ammonium compounds or chlorine bases compounds (hypochlorite or bleach).

Vinegar, lemon juice and methylated spirits are **not recommended** unless testing has been undertaken to validate and verify effectiveness.

If using bleach to sanitise:

- Make up your bleach and water solution every 24 hours as the chemical breaks down and becomes ineffective
- To sanitise using domestic bleach (4% chlorine) add 2.5 ml (1/2 teaspoon of bleach) into 1 litre of water
- To sanitise using commercial bleach check the dilution factor from the instructions on the supplier's label
- Enquiries for dilution factors contact your Environmental Health Officer.



Test Purchasing Program

Tobacco smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Australia and a leading risk factor for many chronic conditions such as cancer, respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular disease. People who start smoking during their early adolescent years are more likely to smoke daily later in life.

Monash Council participates annually in the Cigarette Test Purchasing Program. This program is funded by the Municipal Association of Victoria, in conjunction with the Department of Health's Tobacco Control Unit.

The aim of test purchasing is to monitor and ensure tobacco retailers comply with legislative requirements under the Tobacco Act 1987 with respect to the sale of tobacco products.

The test purchasing program involves a suitably trained person under the age of 18 years and referred to Council by the Department of Health to attempt to purchase cigarettes from tobacco retailers.



Retailers must comply with the requirements Tobacco Act 1987 by ensuring they:

- Do not sell tobacco to a person under 18 years
- Ask for photographic identification if the person looks under 25 years. (Acceptable identification includes a drivers licence, learners permit, key pass, passport or proof of age card)
- Display correct signage
- Tobacco products and packaging must not be visible to the public from anywhere inside or outside the retail shop. (Certified specialist tobacconist has restricted requirements in relation to the display of tobacco products in the store).

In April 2024, Monash Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) conducted 39 test purchase visits which resulted in two sales of cigarettes to a person under the age of 18 years of age (95% compliance).

Once a sale has occurred, Council's EHOs will immediately interview the seller/manager to confirm details of the sale and ask questions around staff training provided, etc.

Appropriate action following a sale/breach may involve an education visit, official warning or issuing of a penalty infringement notice depending on the circumstances.

Proprietors have an obligation to comply with the legislation and ensure regular staff training, education and recordkeeping of training.

It is important for your staff to undertake and document regular training to ensure they understand the requirements of the Tobacco Act.

Tobacco retailers should be familiar with the Tobacco Retailers Guide 2017 to assist business with responsible selling of tobacco.

More info:  www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/tobacco-retailer-guide

 www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/specialist-tobacconist-guide

Monash Civic Centre

 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley  9518 3555  www.monash.vic.gov.au

Monash Interpreter Service

普通话	4713 5001	Việt Ngữ	4713 5003	हिंदी	4713 5005	한국어	4713 5010	தமிழ்	4713 5021
廣東話	4713 5002	Ελληνικά	4713 5004	Italiano	4713 5008	සිංහල	4713 5020	Other languages	4713 5000




Useful links for food businesses


Free online course for food handlers

 dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/index.php/en

Food Safety Supervisor requirements

 www.health.vic.gov.au/food-safety/food-safety-training-skills-and-knowledge


Allergens

 www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/labelling/allergen-labelling

Labelling

 www.health.vic.gov.au/food-safety/food-labelling

Food safety programs

 www.health.vic.gov.au/food-safety/food-safety-programs

Food trader

 www.foodtrader.vic.gov.au

Food recalls

 www.foodstandards.gov.au/food-recalls/alerts

Food Standards Code

 www.foodstandards.gov.au/food-standards-code

FoodSmart food safety program

 www.foodsmart.vic.gov.au

Monash Council website food premises

 www.monash.vic.gov.au/food-premises