

# food matters

## in Bassendean

Town of Bassendean food safety newsletter

## Animals and food businesses

Animals can carry pathogenic organisms that can contaminate food. They may also contaminate food physically through fur, droppings and whole insects.

Food businesses are therefore **not permitted**, except in certain circumstances, to have animals on the premises.

### Which animals are allowed and where?

- Assistance animals must be allowed into dining and drinking areas and any other areas used by customers, but they are not allowed in non-public areas, such as the kitchen. An assistance animal is a guide dog or other animal trained to help a person with a disability (in Section 9 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*).
- Fish, seafood and shellfish are the only live animals allowed in areas where food is handled. This means you can keep decorative fish in tanks and keep and sell live seafood, fish and shellfish on your premises. However, you must protect all food from becoming contaminated by these animals. For example, when cleaning fish tanks you must not contaminate any food or food handling areas (e.g. kitchen sinks and benches).
- Pet dogs may be permitted, but **only in outdoor dining areas that are not enclosed**. If you enclose an outdoor open dining area, even for a short time (for example if in winter you use café blinds and a retractable awning), then dogs are not allowed in it while it is enclosed. Businesses must maintain high standards of food safety and hygiene to ensure animals do not contaminate food.



### Do I have to allow pet dogs in my outdoor dining area?

Under the *Food Standards Code*, it is up to the business owner to decide whether to let customers have their dogs in outdoor dining areas. The business can also say under what circumstances the dogs are allowed, for example, you could tell customers their dogs must be kept on the ground and on a lead.

**It is important to remember the animal cannot be taken through an enclosed area to get to an outdoor dining area. The access to the outdoor dining area must be outdoors.**



# Displaying food for sale

If you're a food business that displays food, it's important to protect it from contamination and keep it at the right temperature so it stays safe to eat.



Under *Standard 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements*, food businesses need to make sure they display food in a safe and suitable way, such as:

- use cabinets or wind shields
- keep food away from open windows, doors, fans and insect sprays or zappers
- use signs to help customers use serving utensils
- keep food out of reach of children
- protect food with food-grade cling wrap, bags, paper strips or containers
- use platters, containers and benches that are easy to clean and sanitise
- keep unpackaged, ready-to-eat food (e.g. muffins) that is displayed on counters behind a barrier
- avoid topping up dishes to prevent cross contamination between batches
- frozen food on display must stay hard frozen
- separate ready-to-eat foods from raw foods
- ensuring potentially hazardous foods are displayed in a way that prevents harmful microorganisms growing to unsafe levels or producing toxins. This means food should be displayed at 5°C or below or 60°C or above.



... display food  
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suitable way ...



Marking a date/day on food after it has been sliced or opened will help you remember when it needs to be used by...

## Safe food for older people

Older people have a higher risk of getting food-borne illness and suffering serious health complications from eating unsafe food. It is important for older people to enjoy a wide range of foods for good nutrition, but extra care must be taken to ensure their food is safe.

**Some foods pose a higher risk because they may contain harmful bacteria such as *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *E. coli*.**

- Always make sure the food you select or receive is from a trusted source, in good condition and at a safe temperature.
- Manufacturers' date markings and instructions should always be followed. Package dates may be labelled as 'Best before', 'Use by' or other words, depending on what the product is. For older people, products should not be used past their 'Use by' date or 'Best before' date.
- Once a food has been opened, the package date no longer applies—it is generally safest to use up ready-to-eat refrigerated food within a day. Marking a date/day on food after it has been sliced or opened will help you remember when it needs to be used by.
- Food handlers must meet [health and hygiene requirements](#) in the Food Safety Standards. These requirements include washing your hands, protecting food from contamination and reporting to your supervisor if you are unwell or may have contaminated food.
- Always follow the [food safety basics](#): cook food thoroughly, keep things clean, keep cold food cold and hot food hot, and keep ready-to-eat food separate from raw food.

# Thermometers

If you're a food business that handles potentially hazardous food, it's important to use a thermometer to check your food is at the right temperature to be sure it is safe to eat.

Under *Standard 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements*, food businesses that handle potentially hazardous food need to have an accurate and accessible thermometer.

.....  
**This means:**

- **there is at least one thermometer somewhere easy to get to (e.g. in an unlocked drawer in the kitchen)**
  - **the thermometer is accurate to within 1°C.**
- .....

## Which thermometer is best?

- A digital probe thermometer is usually best for measuring food temperatures. They are inexpensive and are available from catering and kitchen supply shops.
- Infrared 'gun' thermometers are useful for quick checks and for packaged food—but these only measure the surface temperature.
- Temperature gauges on equipment like bain-maries and refrigerators measure the equipment's temperature—but to be sure of the actual food's temperature you should use a probe thermometer.

## Using the probe thermometer correctly

- Clean and sanitise probe thermometers before and after use—use warm soapy water and an alcohol wipe.
- Place the probe into the thickest part of the food and wait until the temperature stabilises before reading it.
- Measure packaged, chilled food by placing the thermometer lengthwise along or between packages.
- Measure the temperature of different foods in your refrigerator or display unit to check if there are spots where food is not at the right temperature.
- Keep your thermometer in good condition—have it calibrated regularly, replace flat batteries, repair or replace it if it breaks.



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**FREE**  
**Online Food Safety Training**

Now available through the Town of Bassendean Website.

The Town of Bassendean takes food hygiene within our town very seriously. All food businesses have obligations and the Town of Bassendean is assisting food businesses to meet these obligations by providing free access to this exciting new training tool.

There is a high demand for training within the food sector. This training will assist food handlers in developing the required skills and knowledge to ensure food is handled in a safe and hygienic manner.

The program is easy to follow, includes an entertaining presentation as well as interactive quizzes. A training acknowledgement form can be printed upon completion and be kept as a part of your staff records.

Visit [www.bassendean.imalert.com.au](http://www.bassendean.imalert.com.au) to conduct the training now.

## I'm ALERT:

### free online food safety training program

The Town of Bassendean provides free and unlimited access to the I'm ALERT Food Handler training Program, which assists food handlers in gaining valuable skills and knowledge in food safety.

The I'm ALERT Food Handler Training Program is an interactive online training program available to all food businesses, community groups and residents.



To access I'm ALERT, please visit <http://www.bassendean.imalert.com.au>.

# Safe handling of eggs and products containing eggs

*Salmonella* is the principal microorganism of human health concern associated with the consumption of eggs and egg products. There is a potential risk of illness from the consumption of raw or lightly cooked eggs, or the consumption of uncooked foods containing raw egg.

Unhygienic practices used by food handlers during preparation of food containing egg have been reported as contributing factors to the risk of salmonellosis.

**A food business must ensure that food products containing raw eggs are either prepared using pasteurised egg products or implement procedures that ensure the microbial safety of the finished product.**

Several products may contain raw or lightly cooked eggs which include:

- mayonnaise, aioli and dressings
- egg butter
- raw egg-based sauces
- milkshakes/egg nogs
- fried ice cream
- mousses, tiramisu and other desserts containing raw egg.



## Handling and storing



When handling and storing eggs, food businesses should:

- Ensure food handlers wash and dry hands before and after handling eggs.
- Ensure equipment and food contact surfaces are cleaned and sanitised before and after use.
- Store eggs at 5°C (and avoid keeping eggs above 15°C) and minimise the amount of time eggs are kept above 5°C during preparation.
- Follow the storage conditions on egg packaging (if present), minimise temperature fluctuations and only take out the number of eggs required for service.
- Only use clean and uncracked eggs which are within their use by or best before dates.
- Keep raw eggs separate from ready-to-eat food.
- Minimise contact between the internal components of an egg and the shell, as there is a greater likelihood of *Salmonella* being found on the exterior of the shell.
- Use a sanitised egg separator—not the eggshell or hands—when separating the egg yolk from the white.
- Store eggs in their original packaging. The packaging ensures that traceability and shelf-life information remains with the product.
- Not wash eggs prior to use—this could spread microorganisms.

## Risks



To minimise the risks involved, food businesses should ensure that:

- Customers can be informed of whether a product contains raw or lightly cooked eggs so that they can make an informed decision about whether to consume the product.
- Any food product manufactured using raw egg is disposed of if it has not been used within 24 hours of manufacture.
- Different batches of product are kept in separate containers and are not mixed, including topping up the container with a new batch.
- Products containing egg are always stored below 5°C.
- Sauces and dressings containing raw eggs have a pH of 4.2 or less. The acid present in vinegar or lemon juice will lower the pH which inhibits or slows the growth of bacteria present, but it will not kill the bacteria.
- Eggs should only be purchased from reputable suppliers and be stamped.

# Seeds and bean sprouts

Seed sprouts commonly available on the Australian market include—but are not limited to—alfalfa sprouts, broccoli sprouts, chives, snow pea sprouts, mung beans sprouts and soybean sprouts.

**Seed and bean sprouts are considered high-risk horticultural produce as they are commonly eaten raw or lightly cooked. Sprouts can be contaminated with bacteria such as *E. coli*, *Listeria*, and *Salmonella*.**

Potential sources of seed contamination in the field can include faecal matter from grazing animals as well as fertiliser used. Other contaminants can include things like bacteria in water and soil. The seeds can also be contaminated during harvest, sprout production, storage, cleaning, packaging and transportation.

## Managing food safety risks

As harmful bacteria can grow rapidly during the production of seed sprouts, it is important that the food safety risks are managed throughout the entire production process.

Washing sprouts has been found to be not very effective as laboratory studies have shown that bacteria can be internalised in the sprouts, making it difficult to wash off or sanitise.

Bacteria can also be protected in a biofilm on the sprout's surface.

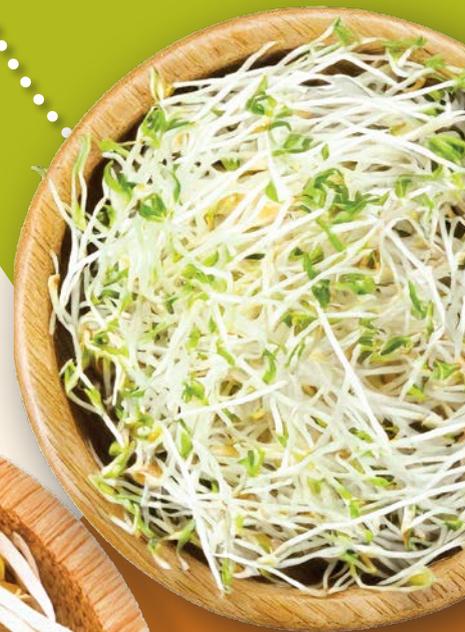


alfalfa sprouts  
broccoli sprouts  
chives  
snow pea sprouts  
mung beans sprouts  
soybean sprouts



## To reduce the risk of food poisoning from sprouts:

- People within vulnerable demographics—such as young children, people who are 70+, people who are immune compromised or pregnant—should **not** eat uncooked sprouts.
- Avoid any sprouts that are dark in colour or smell musty.
- If buying sprouts loose, use tongs or a plastic bag turned inside out to pick them up.
- If buying packaged sprouts, choose crisp-looking ones, preferably from the refrigerator.
- Adhere to the use by date displayed on seed sprout packaging and follow storage directions on the packaging and store seed sprouts at 5°C.
- If growing sprouts, be aware that even the most hygienic of conditions will not ensure that sprouts are bacteria-free.
- Cook all sprouts thoroughly before eating.



# Maintenance of fixtures, fittings and equipment

All food business proprietors are required to ensure the design, construction and space provided in the food premises is appropriate for the activities conducted in the business.

This includes:

1. **Ensuring that hand wash facilities are always:**
  - provided with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels at all times
  - adequate in size and designated for the sole purpose of washing hands, arms and face
  - easily accessible to food handlers at all times.
2. **Ensuring food contact surfaces of fixtures, fittings and equipment:**
  - are able to be easily and effectively cleaned and, if necessary, able to be sanitised
  - are unable to absorb grease, food particles and water
  - are made of a material that will not contaminate food
  - do not allow for the harbourage of pests.
3. **Keeping all equipment and appliances, including utensils, crockery, cutlery and containers in a good state of repair and disposing of any broken or damaged items.**



## Infringement notices

Recently, a food business within the Town was issued with three infringement notices, totalling \$750 for failing to comply with the *Food Act 2008*, and another food business was fined \$1000 for displaying food for sale which was past the use-by-date.

The Town is taking a firmer stance with food premises that demonstrate poor food handling, unsatisfactory cleaning and lack of maintenance of equipment and the premises. It should be noted that the offences carried a maximum penalty ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 via prosecution in the courts.

Infringement Notices are an efficient mechanism for dealing with some offences. The Town will undertake prosecutions for serious offences, where Infringement Notices have previously been issued or after repeated poor performance.

**You can avoid being issued an infringement by ensuring your food business complies with all requirements of the *Food Act 2008* and by following the guidance and recommendations provided to you during inspections. It is recommended that businesses review their past inspection reports to ensure that they are adequately addressing any non-compliances.**



## Recent prosecutions in Western Australia

A café in the Town of Port Hedland was fined \$7,000 plus court costs of \$2,125 for non-compliances relating to hand washing, permitting live animals in the food premises, not storing hazardous food under temperature control, not maintaining the premises and equipment to a standard of cleanliness.

A fast-food business in the City of Swan was fined \$7,000 plus court costs of \$3,000 for not maintaining the premises and equipment to a standard of cleanliness.

A food business in the Shire of Esperance was fined \$23,700 plus court costs of \$1,500 for not maintaining the premises and equipment to a standard of cleanliness and the incorrect storage of food.

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