

# Feedback

## Welcome!

Thanks for being patient for our latest issue of *Feedback*. It has been a little while. We hope you have missed us. Please let us know if you have and if you would like to see us again.



## Fruit and Veg -a health hazard?

A number of food poisoning outbreaks worldwide, and in Australia, have been linked to products like fruit and vegetables. You don't normally associate fruit and veg with being unwell but almost any type of food can be a risk if it becomes contaminated or is not handled correctly.

Cases of fruit and vegetables overseas have become contaminated during growth and handling with *E. coli* and *Salmonella*. Fresh cut produce can become contaminated during the processing when bacteria that is present on the skin transfers to the flesh when it is cut.

**There have been a number of cases of food poisoning from *Salmonella*, particularly rockmelons. Contaminated water, fertiliser, contact with pests/animals or insufficient cleaning of rockmelons prior to sale could be contributing factors to rockmelons becoming contaminated with *Salmonella*.**

As a result, advice to consumers and business owners is to take some simple precautions to minimise the risk from food poisoning from fruit and vegetables:

- When buying fresh cut produce, ensure it is refrigerated below 5°C.
- Fresh produce should be refrigerated within 2 hours of peeling or cutting. Leftover cut produce should be discarded if left above 5°C for more than 2 hours.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables with cool tap water immediately before eating.
- Scrub fruit and vegetables with hard outer surfaces (such as rockmelons, oranges, potatoes and carrots) with a clean produce brush.
- Use clean cutting boards and utensils when handling fresh produce. If possible, use a clean cutting board and knife for fresh produce and a separate board and knife for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Cut away damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruit and vegetables as bacteria can grow in these areas. Clean the knife when finished to avoid contaminating other food.
- Cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops should always be washed and sanitised after coming in contact with fresh produce (the same as with raw meat, poultry, or seafood).
- Clean benches and equipment after contact with fresh produce.

## A word from your EHO – Food Safety snippets

The last couple of *Feedback* editions have provided you with some in depth information on one particular food safety topic (see our website for access to our previous issues). So, this issue, we thought we would break it up a bit and cover a range of topics, new and old.

As always, we would love to hear back from you. We are always looking for new topics to include in our newsletter as well as looking for ways to improve how we provide this information.

Email me on [stell.hoffman@swan.wa.gov.au](mailto:stell.hoffman@swan.wa.gov.au) or if you would like to chat all things food safety please call me on 92679153.

### Stell Hoffman

Environmental Health Officer

## Change of details

Quite often our risk assessment officers turn up to do a food business risk assessment to find that the business has changed hands. This is actually an offence under the *Food Act 2008* as you have not notified the local authority that you are operating a food business, even if the business was already operating as a food business.

If you have recently taken over a food business and haven't been in touch with us please do so as soon as you can. You need to make sure your details are kept up to date. We are due to send out our licence renewals in July and if we don't have the correct details then you won't receive your renewal and will run the risk of being penalised.

There is a 'Change of ownership for an existing food business' form available on the City's website and you can email it straight to us. And there is no fee for this. Easy!

[www.swan.wa.gov.au/Services-support/Public-health/Health-services-forms-and-guidelines](http://www.swan.wa.gov.au/Services-support/Public-health/Health-services-forms-and-guidelines)



## Gas Safety

A Prohibition Notice was published in the Government Gazette on 10th June last year. The order prohibits the use of portable gas cooking appliances that have an enclosed LP Gas cartridge (e.g. butane)—often referred to as lunchbox cookers—for indoor locations or commercial applications.

As a general rule if the cooking appliance is made for outdoor use it should not be used indoors. We have been asked to work with the Department of Commerce in looking out for this type of equipment in food businesses and will report back to them if we observe this type of equipment in use.

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If you have any questions please contact Department of Commerce EnergySafety on (08) 6251 1900 or by email at [energysafety@commerce.wa.gov.au](mailto:energysafety@commerce.wa.gov.au)

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## Undercover Environmental Health Officer

Health Services will be undertaking a trial food sampling project that will involve purchasing lunch from a random selection of takeaway premises and sending them off to a laboratory to be tested for bacteria. The catch is that we will be undercover—kind of like we were one of your customers.

This will give us a picture of the safety of ready-to-eat foods being sold in the City of Swan and will indicate if food-handling practices are up to standard. The project aim is to identify food safety issues and work with businesses to rectify those issues.

We already undertake regular food sampling in Swan to check for accurate food labels and nutritional information, pesticides and other chemicals that may be found in food.

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We will report back on the results of our new undercover food sampling program in the next issue of *Feedback*. If you have any questions please contact Health Service on 9267 9153.

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# Country of origin labelling

You may be aware that Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) is changing. The Australian Government has introduced new food labelling laws to make it clearer to consumers where their food is produced, grown, made or packed.

**The requirements came into effect on 1 July 2016 and there is a two year transition period. So businesses have until 1 July 2018 to comply.**

Compliance and enforcement will be managed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).



The foods requiring CoOL under the new standard is the same as the current *Food Standards Code*.

There are a number of helpful documents to help you comply with the new requirements as well as an online tool to help you develop your new labels. Look for the *Country of Origin food labelling guide* on the ACCC's website [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au)

**For more information visit [www.foodlabels.industry.gov.au](http://www.foodlabels.industry.gov.au) or phone the Infocentre on 1300 302 502.**

## Hand wash basins are just for washing hands!

It surprises us sometimes when we find the hand wash basin full of dishes, utensils and other items that are just not supposed to be there. How are you actually washing your hands if you can't use your hand wash basin? It either means you are not or you are using another sink in your kitchen. Neither of these is good practice and demonstrates to us that you don't have the right skills and knowledge to do your job properly (and handle food safely).

The other sinks in your kitchen are either for food preparation or cleaning dirty dishes. Washing your hands in your food preparation sink can introduce dirt and bacteria and contaminate food. Washing your hands in your washing-up sink can contaminate your clean hands.

**Good healthy practice starts with your hands.**

**Keep your hand wash basin clean, clear, well maintained and used.**

## Can I use raw eggs in recipes?

Eggs may be an ingredient in your homemade sauces such as mayonnaise, aioli and hollandaise sauce, drinks such as eggnog, desserts such as mousse, tiramisu and homemade ice cream.

Raw eggs are a risk to contain *Salmonella* bacteria. *Salmonella* can be on the shell as well as inside the egg so raw eggs are more of a risk if they are cracked or dirty. Once inside the egg, the *Salmonella* bacteria keep multiplying which may make your customers sick. And they may not smell or look 'off'.

*Salmonella* can spread very easily so it is important to wash and dry your hands thoroughly after handling eggs. Store and handle raw eggs like you would when handling and preparing raw chicken, meat and seafood.

The Department of Health WA on their Healthy WA website ([www.healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au)) advises 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. They also recommend that foods containing raw or lightly cooked eggs are not eaten by young children, elderly people, pregnant women and 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.**

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.



# FoodSafe®

FoodSafe® is an in-house food safety package that allows you to train your staff and implement written food safety practices like cleaning schedules, temperature records and maintenance audits.

Some updates and improvements have been made and FoodSafe® is now available for you to implement in your food business.

Visit the Environmental Health WA website for more information and to purchase your copy online [www.ehawa.org.au](http://www.ehawa.org.au)

## I'm Alert

I'm Alert use is still proving popular with our food businesses. We have had an average number of 755 users per year since we started subscribing to the program in November 2009.

We continue to provide this service to our food businesses and community for free to make training your staff on food safety easy and convenient. Of course it helps us in doing our job if staff have the skills and knowledge they need to do their job correctly.

For those that don't know, I'm Alert is a free online food safety training program for your food-handling staff: visit [www.swan.wa.gov.au/imalert](http://www.swan.wa.gov.au/imalert)



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COS04060