



Seafood Safety

Prawns, oysters and other types of seafood are popular dishes, especially during the hotter months. To keep them safe, they need special care from the time they're bought, to the time they're consumed.

Shopping

- Only buy seafood from reputable retailers. Seafood from unknown suppliers may not have been handled properly and could cause food poisoning
- Take a cooler bag or Esky to the store or fish markets. Ask the fishmonger if they could pack ice with the seafood (they are not obliged to supply ice)
- Purchase seafood with a fresh sea smell
- For whole fish, the gills should be bright pink-red and firm and the flesh should be bright, not dull
- For sushi, raw fish must be sashimi-grade, very fresh and of the highest quality
- For whole prawns, the heads should be firmly attached and the shell tight and shiny
- Opened oysters should look wet and smell of fresh sea
- For unopened oysters and mussels, shells must be closed or close when tapped
- Purchase seafood last

Storage

- Put seafood into the fridge or freezer as soon as you get home, don't leave in the car or on the bench
- Store prawns in an airtight container, or covered tightly with plastic wrap, away from other food in the coldest part of fridge and leave in the shell for as long as possible
- Opened oysters should be stored in the fridge below 5C

Preparation and eating

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly before and after handling raw fish and keep kitchen utensils and benches clean and dry
- Eat prawns within 3 days of purchase or freeze them for up to 3 months
- Eat opened oysters within 24 hours of purchase
- Don't eat oysters that are dry or, sunken into the shell
- Don't eat overly 'fishy' or off-smelling seafood
- Don't eat raw fish, opened oysters or mussels, prawns and other seafood if they've been out of the fridge for more than two hours

People vulnerable to food poisoning

Some people with lower or compromised immunity can be more vulnerable to food poisoning. These include people with severely suppressed immune systems and pregnant women. They need to take particular care with some types of seafood:

- Avoid eating raw seafood such as sashimi, store-bought sushi and oysters (canned oysters are safe), ready-to-eat chilled peeled prawns and smoked salmon
- Handle raw shellfish carefully before cooking
- Cook all seafood thoroughly
- Don't eat shellfish that do not open during cooking
- Don't cross-contaminate cooked seafood and other foods with raw seafood and their juices



Recreational fishing

- Only purchase pipis, oysters and mussels from reputable commercial retailers, never collect and consume recreationally caught shellfish.
- Only catch or collect seafood when water quality is good. Remember that water quality changes and not all harmful things can be seen with the naked eye.
- Keep recreational seafood cold and covered by putting in ice or in fridge straight away
- Keep fishing equipment clean using uncontaminated water
- Don't let seafood or bait drip onto other food
- Always thoroughly cook recreational seafood, never eat it raw.

Key food safety tips

To keep all perishable food safe, follow the key food safety tips.

- Keep it cold
- Keep it clean
- Keep it hot
- Check the label

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