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WATCH OUT FOR *SALMONELLA* FOOD POISONING THIS SUMMER

As temperatures rise, NSW Health is warning people to be wary of *Salmonella* poisoning, with 252 cases already reported across the state last month.

Dr Vicky Sheppard, Director Communicable Diseases at NSW Health, said careful preparation and storage of food is the best defence against salmonellosis – a type of gastroenteritis caused by *Salmonella* bacteria found in animals.

“Consuming products containing undercooked eggs and spreading germs in the kitchen are the most common sources of salmonellosis outbreaks in NSW,” Dr Sheppard said.

“Salmonellosis can be quite severe and in some cases, particularly with young babies, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems, people have to be hospitalised to manage dehydration.”

Salmonellosis symptoms include fever, headache, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. Symptoms usually start around six to 72 hours after the contaminated food is eaten and usually last for four to seven days.

“It is important that people do not prepare food for others while they are unwell with salmonellosis and, as a precaution, for 48 hours after symptoms have passed.”

Last summer, 1089 salmonellosis cases were reported in NSW, a more than 30 per cent reduction in the number of cases reported at the same time two years ago, when the NSW Food Authority introduced the NSW Food Safety Strategy.

NSW Food Authority CEO Dr Lisa Szabo said to reduce the risk of *Salmonella* poisoning, consumers and food retailers can use commercially produced products instead of handmade mayonnaise and sauces.

“It is also much safer to use commercially pasteurised eggs rather than raw eggs in ready-to-eat products such as desserts and dressings,” Dr Szabo said.

“Businesses in NSW must comply with strict requirements around the use of raw eggs in foods. In NSW, the sale of eggs with dirty or cracked shells is prohibited, as these can increase the risk of contamination.

Dr Sheppard said food must be cooked thoroughly and not left out in the heat. “The longer food is left out the more the bacteria will multiply,” she said.

“Refrigerated food should be kept below five degrees and hot foods should be kept above 60 degrees. It’s a good rule of thumb that if food requiring temperature control has been sitting on your table for more than two hours, you should throw it out.”

“Salmonellosis can take the joy out of the festive season but just a few simple precautions can make all the difference,” Dr Sheppard said.

For further information click on the NSW Health Salmonellosis [fact sheet](#).