

# Guidelines for Preparing Sushi Products

Sushi and sashimi must be handled with care to prevent foodborne illness. Health risks related with sushi products arise from traditional preparation methods for the two main ingredients:

- Raw seafood products sometimes contain the infective parasites such as *Anisakinae* and *Diphyllobothrium*.
- Acidified sushi rice is traditionally held at temperatures that promote the growth of foodborne illness bacteria, such as *Bacillus cereus*.

The following guidelines are intended to reduce these particular risks.

## Handling of Seafood Products to be Served Raw

1. Obtain seafood products from approved sources.
2. **Freeze** seafood products to be served raw  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 7 days, or below  $-35^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 15 hours, prior to service to destroy parasites that might be present.

The following seafood products **do not need to be frozen** prior to service:

- Fish that was aquaculture-raised and fed formulated, pelletized feed.
- The following Tuna species that do not present a parasite problem:
  - Albacore,
  - Yellowfin (Ahi)
  - Blackfin
  - Bluefin
  - Bigeye
- Seafood products that the supplier indicates are at least one of the following:
  - adequately frozen by the supplier
  - confirmed as “sushi-grade” and parasite free

The operator **must** have written confirmation from the supplier, like areceipt.

- Fish eggs that have been removed from the skein and rinsed

3. Avoid cross contamination between raw and cooked ingredients:
  - Food handlers must wash their hands before and after handling raw seafood products.
  - Bamboo mats used for sushi preparation should be wrapped in food grade plastic wrap. Replace the plastic wrap every 2 hours and each time there is contact with a different species of raw fish.
  - Other surfaces that come into contact with raw seafood must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before preparing other foods on that surface.

### Preparation of Acidified Sushi Rice

1. Follow a written recipe for sushi rice. The recipe must include:
  - the amount of rice and water in each batch prior to cooking,
  - the amount (and brand name) of vinegar/acidification agent added to the rice.
2. Keep the cooked rice hot (above 60°C) before you add the vinegar.
3. Mix in the vinegar by placing the cooked rice in shallow containers (i.e. less than 4 inches/10 cm depth, such as a plastic bus pan), to help cool and acidify rice evenly.
4. Ensure the pH (acidity) of the sushi rice is below 4.6 or keep the rice refrigerated at all times.

Your Environmental Health Officer/Public Health Inspector can make arrangements to test the pH of the sushi rice. Ideally, a calibrated pH meter should be available in your premises and used to ensure that this acidity requirement is consistently met.

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Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at [ahs.ca/eph](https://ahs.ca/eph).

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