

## **Advice 08-2015 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on the risk assessment of the conservation at ambient temperature of prepared rice and sushi.**

The Scientific Committee has evaluated the microbiological risks of the conservation at ambient temperature of prepared rice and sushi based on delivered results of scientific studies, of bacterial growth simulations performed by the Committee and expert opinion.

The preparation of the rice implies that it is cooked, then cooled, after which ingredients such as sake, vinegar, pepper and salt are added. The most relevant microbiological hazards linked to prepared rice are *Bacillus cereus*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella*. Sushi consists of prepared rice to which ingredients are added such as sake, pepper and salt, and sometimes other ingredients such as (raw) fish/seafood, (raw) meat, vegetables, tropical fruits, baked egg, seaweed, etc. The microbiological hazards linked to sushi may be of different origin. The most important microbiological hazards linked to sushi are: *Salmonella*, human pathogenic *E. coli*, *Vibrio* spp., *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Bacillus cereus*. The rice is often prepared in advance and stored at ambient temperature. Also sushi is sometimes stored at ambient temperature. This raises questions regarding food safety risks.

The Committee concludes that the conservation times of rice and sushi with a low risk depend on the further distribution possibilities of the sushi. In case of consumption of sushi on the site of preparation and in function of the order of the client, the additional risk that arises when the prepared rice is held maximum 24 hours at ambient temperature, is estimated as being low. In case of consumption of sushi on the site of preparation and where the sushi is presented to the client on a conveyor belt in the restaurant, the additional risk that arises when the prepared rice and the sushi are held respectively maximum 12 hours and maximum 3 hours at ambient temperature, is estimated as being low. In case sushi is prepared on site and offered in a refrigerated counter, the additional risk that arises, on the one hand, when the prepared rice is held maximum 12 hours at ambient temperature and, on the other hand, when the sushi is stored refrigerated at the temperature of the most risky product such as prescribed in the royal decree of 13 July 2014 concerning food hygiene, is estimated as being low.

Finally, the Scientific Committee makes some recommendations.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section "Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen" and "Comité scientifique/Avis".