

# AQIS fact sheet



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine  
and Inspection Service

## Rakhi: important quarantine information



Exchanging a Rakhi is a sacred tradition signifying the unique bond shared between brothers and sisters. For those who are separated by distance the Raksha-Bandhan tradition is carried on by sending the sacred Rakhi and gifts around the world.

Although these gifts are sent with the very best of intentions it is common for well meaning family and friends to send not only their prayers, but also high risk items that can be detrimental to the Australian environment.

Australia is free from many pests and diseases present in other countries but gifts mailed to Australia containing high risk items could bring these into the country, which would have a devastating effect on Australia's import and export industries. That is why Australia has strict quarantine laws in place prohibiting high risk items from entering the country.

### What traditional Rakhi gifts pose a high quarantine risk?

Quarantine risk items include:

- Rakhi threads made with seeds or flowers
- traditional Indian sweets (mithai) containing milk such as barfi, mysore pak, gulab jamun, rasgulla, pedas or soan-papdi
- grains and dried fruits

### How do you stop high risk items from entering Australia?

All international mail is X-rayed, inspected or checked by detector dogs, and packages containing risk items are opened and inspected.

Due to the volume of mail received, the lead up to Rakhi is the second busiest time of the year for AQIS—last year AQIS processed more than 150 000 mail items associated with the festival.

### Does the increase in mail mean that my gifts will be delayed?

AQIS understands and respects the significance of Rakhi and is committed to processing mail in a timely manner to ensure special gifts are received in time for Rakhi celebrations. This is not possible if mail contains high risk items, as these require further processing and may lead to delays.

### What can I do to ensure that my Rakhi gift arrives on time?

Processing delays can be avoided. Simply tell your friends and family overseas not to send you gifts containing high risk items—as mail not containing risk items is processed much faster.

You should also encourage them to correctly list all contents of each parcel and to correctly fill out the Postal Declaration Label.

### For more information:

- visit [www.aqis.gov.au/rakhi](http://www.aqis.gov.au/rakhi)
- download the *What can't be mailed to Australia?* brochure
- call AQIS on 1800 020 504 (free call in Australia and is in English)