

Chocolate/Confectionery

Bloom:

Chocolate may develop a light coloured bloom if stored at too high a temperature. It is not mould but is due to fat separation. It is not harmful.

No public health risk,
Action: Contact retailer

Crystals:

Large crystals may form in confectionery and may be mistaken for glass. The crystal will dissolve in warm water.

No public health risk,
Action: Contact retailer

Bakery Goods

Bakery Char:

Bread and cakes may contain bits of over cooked dough which has flaked off bakery tins. It is not necessarily an indicator of poor hygiene. However it is sometimes mistaken for rodent droppings.

No public health risk,
Action: Contact retailer

Carbonised Grease:

The machinery used to produce bread and cakes is lubricated with a non-toxic vegetable oil. Occasionally some may become incorporated into dough giving areas of the product a grey/greasy appearance.

No public, health risk,
Action: Contact retailer

Dried Foods

Insects:

Insects like beetles and weevils may infest dried products such as flour, sugar and pulses if these foods are stored for too long. These do not carry disease, but they breed very quickly in warm, humid conditions, and so spread into uncontaminated food very quickly.

No public health risk, Action: Do not use an insecticide because of the danger of contaminating your food. Dispose of all visibly infested packages in an outside waste bin and thoroughly clean the cupboards using a vacuum cleaner, paying particular attention to crevices. Immediately after use, dispose of the cleaner contents in an outside waste bin. Store new dried goods in airtight containers and ensure good ventilation in storage areas

Meat

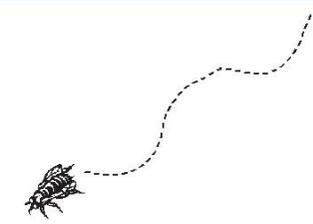
Skin, bone etc.:

Products made from meat and/or poultry may contain small bones, skin, hair, bristles or parts of blood vessels. These are unsightly but rarely a health hazard, as they are normal parts of the original animal.

No public health risk,
Action: Contact retailer



Common complaints about



Food

Do's and don'ts when making a complaint

Do

Do keep receipts (not essential but helpful)

Do obtain the exact name and address where the food was purchased.

Do keep the food in the wrapper and container

Do keep perishable food in the refrigerator (especially if your complaint involves decomposition or 'off' smells and tastes)

Do read the label for best before and use by dates, and instructions for use.

If you use food that is out of date, or not in accordance with the instructions you can expect problems.

Don't

Don't be tempted to handle or pull out any foreign object found in the food - leave it in place.

Don't put the food in a place where further deterioration or contamination could take place (e.g. keep it in the fridge but separate from other foods)

Don't throw away any of the food or packaging

Don't eat the remaining products in the pack, e.g. a six pack or four pack, etc.

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For more information please visit our website at:
www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Outside Eastbourne, contact your local district or city council.

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Common Complaints about Food

The Environmental Health Service receives many complaints relating to food each year. Foreign objects in food are a common complaint, however not all pose a health risk.

The following are typical food complaints together with a short explanation and suggestions for the most suitable course of action. The Environmental Health Service does not get involved in any compensation claims. This is a matter that you must take up yourself with the manufacturer and, if necessary, through the civil courts.

If you require further advice please visit our website at:
www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Food Complaints

No matter how good a manufacturer, or supplier of food is, there will be occasions when something goes wrong and the food sold is not acceptable to the customer.

Who should I complain to?

Environmental Health Service

The Environmental Health Service will deal with food complaints that pose a significant risk to public health. The Environmental Health Service does not get involved in any compensation claims. Compensation claims are a civil matter that you must take up with the manufacturer and, if necessary, through the courts. Environmental Health will deal with:

- Food that is not safe to eat or actually makes you ill
- Food that is so contaminated that it could not reasonably be eaten, e.g. a mouldy pie
- Food that contains a foreign object, e.g. glass in a loaf of bread

Trading Standards

Trading Standards Officers also investigate food complaints. The types of complaint that they deal with are as follows:

- Chemical contamination of food and improper use of additives
- Composition of food e.g. sausages must contain a minimum percentage of meat
- Adulteration of foods
- Labelling offences, and misleading claims
- Quality and nature of food e.g. cod sold as haddock

Contact Trading Standards

Email:
trading.standards@eastsussex.gov.uk
Tel: 0345 40 40 506

Environmental Health Action

In order for the Environmental Health Service to take formal action there will have to be:

- A significant risk to public health
- A good chain of evidence, e.g. details of where the food was bought, any relevant packaging etc.
- Evidence that the company concerned has not taken all reasonable steps to prevent the problem.

Any formal action must also comply with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

The Shop, Manufacturer or Supplier

For relatively minor problems it is best to complain directly to the company that sold you the food, without involving Environmental Health or Trading Standards. Instances where it is appropriate to contact the shop directly are as follows:

- If you are not fully satisfied with the product and you merely want your money back. Most large supermarket chains have an efficient quality control and complaint procedure to enable customers to return an unsatisfactory food complaint and obtain a refund. The supermarkets log these complaints and refer them to their suppliers, who can identify trends resulting in remedial action.
- The complaint is not of a serious nature e.g. a part of a pea pod in a can of peas, or a 'flat' carbonated drink.

“Now, I know I didn't order snails”



The following are the most common complaints we receive with the action you should take.

Codworm:

White fish such as cod or haddock may be infested with a small, round brownish yellow worm. These are found in the flesh. They are killed by cooking and are harmless to humans. The affected parts of the fish are usually cut away, but some may be overlooked.

No public health risk, Action: Contact retailer

Tinned foods

Field Insects:

Insects that live naturally in fields may be harvested along with fruit and vegetables. Whilst food companies take steps to remove these insects, some will slip through the net. These insects and grubs are killed and sterilised by the canning process. As the use of pesticides decreases, the incidence of these pests will increase.

No public health risk, Action: Contact retailer

Wasps & Fruit Flies:

These are common in tins of fruit. They are naturally associated with ripe fruit and do not carry disease.

No public health risk, Action: Contact retailer

Mould:

Dented, damaged or incorrectly processed tins may allow mould growth to occur. This could indicate an error in production or storage.

Possible public health risk, Action: Contact Environmental Health

Fish

Glowing fish;

Luminous bacteria can sometimes be found on seafood. Seafood such as crabmeat, cooked shrimp, prawns and simulated seafood products made from surimi are the most common seafood's associated with luminescence or glowing. When seafood glows it means that luminous bacteria are present. It does not mean the seafood is unsafe or of low quality. There are no reports of illness from luminous marine bacteria growing on seafood.

No public health risk, Action: Contact retailer

Glass-like Crystals:

Certain naturally occurring elements commonly found in fish may develop into hard crystals during the canning process. These crystals may be mistaken for glass fragments and are called struvite. They are not harmful and will be broken down by stomach acids if swallowed. It is especially common in tinned salmon. Struvite crystals will dissolve if placed in vinegar and gently heated...glass will not.

No public health risk, Action: Contact retailer if struvite, Environmental Health if glass.

Vegetables & Fruit Stones, soil & slugs

Fruit and vegetables commonly have soil, stones or small slugs adhering to them. This is quite normal as they originate in the soil.

No public health risk, Action: wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly

Greenfly:

Salad vegetables, especially lettuce, may have greenfly attached. This is becoming increasingly common as the use of pesticides decreases. Greenfly are difficult to wash off but they are not harmful. In fact, they demonstrate that the salad is fresh.

No public health risk, Action: no action required

Mould:

Mould growth will naturally occur when fruit and vegetables become damaged and bruised, or if stored for too long. We recommend that you check produce before purchase.

No public health risk, Action: Dispose of mouldy produce