

Carbonised Grease (No public health risk)

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

Action: *Contact Manufacturer*

DRIED FOODS

Insects - Psocids (No public health risk)

Dried products such as flour, sugar and pulses may contain small insects such as psocids (book lice). These do not carry disease but they eat through the paper of the packet. They breed very quickly in warm, dark, humid conditions and so spread into uncontaminated food very quickly.

Action: *Throw out all affected food. Clean cupboards with bleach solution and dry thoroughly. Store new, dried goods in airtight containers. Ensure good ventilation in kitchen.*

CHOCOLATE/CONFECTIONERY

Bloom (No public health risk)

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.

Action: *Return to Retailer*

Crystals (No public health risk)

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

Action: *Test with warm water. Notify Public Protection Service if it does not dissolve.*

For further help and information contact:

Public Protection Service	Telephone: 0161 912 4918
Trafford Town Hall	Fax: 0161 912 1113
Talbot Road, STRETFORD	
Manchester M31 0YJ	

If you decide you want this department to investigate, you should:-

- keep the food, any wrappings & labels and receipt safe
- keep the food in its original container where possible
- avoid handling foreign objects - if they are embedded in the food do not displace them
- keep perishable foods in the fridge or freezer.

FOOD COMPLAINTS

Discovering a food complaint, such as a foreign object in food, is a very unpleasant experience, but may not necessarily pose a serious health risk. It is important that officer time is spent dealing with food complaints where there is a risk to public health, such as:-

- Food which is unfit for human consumption;
- Food which contains a foreign object which poses a serious health risk (e.g. glass, metal);
- Food which contains any insects or other matter which suggests a particular problem at the place of retail sale, manufacture etc..

The following courses of action are available to you for dealing with food complaints:

Option 1 Ask the Public Protection Service to investigate.

An officer will assess if the complaint is justified and if the complaint warrants further investigation because there is a risk to public health as detailed above. You will be informed if the officer intends to take no further action. If the complaint does warrant further investigation, as a minimum, we will contact or visit the premises concerned, and where appropriate we will contact the local authority in whose area the complaint originates from.

You will be asked to sign a declaration of release form and must be willing to abide by the decision the Authority reaches at the conclusion of its investigation. You will also be asked to provide a witness statement.

The Council is unable to negotiate compensation for complaints on your behalf.

Option 2 For non pre-packed fresh foods return the food, container etc to the shop from which it was purchased and ask to see the person in charge. For pre-packed foods write to or telephone the manufacturer. The address should be on the package.

Explain the nature of your complaint and ask them to investigate it. Ask them to write to you with their explanations of how the problem arose.

If after pursuing the matter with the relevant shop/company you are still not satisfied with their response you have the option to return to the Public Protection Services with details of your progress. At this stage we may not be able to take any action other than to write to the company concerned noting their failure to satisfy you. We would hope that this would stimulate them into responding to your complaint and also enable us to record their failure and take this into account in any further dealings we might have with them.

Option 3 You may wish to take private legal action against the retailer/manufacturer. You should discuss this matter with a solicitor.

Here are some common food complaints together with a short explanation and suggestions for the most suitable course of action should you find one.

TINNED FOODS

Insects (No public health risk)

Occasionally small grubs may be discovered in canned vegetables. These are commonly found in sweetcorn and tomatoes. The grubs are in fact the larvae of a moth. They live inside the kernel/tomato and so are impossible to see before processing. They are killed and sterilised by the canning process. As the use of pesticides decreases, the incidence of these pests will increase.

Action: *Contact Manufacturer*

Wasps and Fruit Flies (No public health risk)

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

Action: *Contact Manufacturer*

Struvite (No public health risk)

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

Action: *Heat in vinegar. Contact Manufacturer if Struvite, Contact Environmental Protection Service if Glass*

Mould (Possible public health risk)

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

Action: *Contact Public Protection Service*

FISH

Codworm (No public health risk)

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 over-looked.

Action: *Contact Retailer/Manufacturer*

MEAT AND POULTRY

Skin, Bone etc. (No public health risk)

Products made from meat and/or poultry may contain small bones, skin or parts of blood vessels. These are unsightly but rarely a health hazard, as they are normal parts of the original animal. Any personal inconvenience, e.g. chipped tooth, is best dealt with by the individual, via the civil courts if necessary.

Action: *Contact Retailer/Manufacturer*

Note: It is very rare for prohibited parts of an animal OR non-food species to be used for human food. Meat such as chicken or lamb is easily available and so inexpensive that it makes the use of prohibited parts/species uneconomic.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Stones, Soil and Slugs (No public health risk)

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

Action: *Wash Fruit and Vegetables thoroughly*

Note: Mould growth will naturally occur when fruit and vegetables become bruised and damaged. This will be minimised if the buyer checks the produce before purchase and handles/stores carefully afterwards.

Greenfly (No public health risk)

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 indicate that the salad is fresh.

Action: *Do Nothing*

BAKERY GOODS

Bakery Char (No public health risk)

Bread and cakes may contain bits of overcooked dough, which has flaked off bakery tins, and it is not necessarily an indicator of poor hygiene. It may be mistaken for rodent droppings, which are black and a regular torpedo shape whereas bakery char is greyish and comes in uneven shapes.

Action: *Contact Retailer*