

Examples of common food complaints

The table provides details of typical food complaints together with suggestions for the most suitable course of action.

Complaint	Details
<p>Bakery Char: Advice: no public health risk – return to retailer.</p>	Bread and cakes may contain bits of overcooked dough that has flaked off the bakery tins. It is not necessarily an indicator of poor hygiene, although they maybe mistaken for rodent droppings. Rodent droppings are black and a regular torpedo shape, while bakery char is blackish and comes in uneven shapes.
<p>Carbonised grease in baking: Advice: no public health risk – return to retailer.</p>	The machinery used to produce bread and cakes is lubricated with a non-toxic vegetable oil. Occasionally some oil may become incorporated into the dough giving areas of the product a grey/greasy appearance.
<p>Bloom in chocolate: Advice: no public health risk – return to retailer.</p>	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.
<p>Insects in dry foods: Advice: no public health risks – throw out all affected food, clean cupboards with a weak bleach solution and dry thoroughly. Store new dried goods in airtight containers.</p>	Dried products such as flour, sugar and pulses may contain small insects such as psocids (book lice). These do not carry disease, but like ward dark and humid conditions and can spread easily to uncontaminated food.
<p>Small worms in white fish: Advice: no public health risk – return to retailer.</p>	White fish such as cod or haddock may be infested with a small, round brownish yellow codworm. 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.
<p>Skin or bone in meat products: Advice: no public health risk – return to retailer.</p>	Products made from meat and/or poultry may contain small bones or skin or parts of blood vessels. These are unsightly but not a health risk as they are normal parts of the original animal.
<p>Insects in tinned food: Advice: no public health risk – return to retailer.</p>	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. Wasps and fruit flies are common in tins of fruit. They are naturally associated with ripe fruit and do not carry disease.
<p>Glass like crystals in tinned fish: Advice: no public health risk - contact the manufacturer if struvite, and Norwich City Council's food safety team if glass.</p>	Struvite: 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 dissolve if placed in vinegar and gently heated, <u>glass</u> will not.
<p>Mould in tins: Advice: Possible public health risk - contact Norwich City Council's food safety team.</p>	Dented, damaged, or incorrectly processed tins may allow mould growth to occur. This could indicate an error in production or storage.
<p>Stones, soil or slugs on fruit and vegetables: Advice: no public health risk - wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly.</p>	Fruit and vegetables commonly have soil, stones or small slugs adhering to them. This is quite normal as they originate in the soil.
<p>Greenfly: Advice: No public health risk - wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly.</p>	Salad vegetables may have green fly attached, especially lettuce. This is becoming increasingly common as the use of pesticides decreases. Greenfly are difficult to wash off and they are not harmful. In fact they may demonstrate that the salad is fresh.
<p>Mould growth on fruit and vegetables: No public health risk - dispose of damaged items.</p>	Mould will naturally occur when fruit and vegetables become damaged and bruised. This will be minimised if the buyer checks the produce before purchase.