

## FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Stones, soil & slugs - (supplied unwashed) – Fruit & vegetables commonly have soil, stones or small slugs adhering to them. This is quite normal as they originate from soil.

Action: Wash all fruit & vegetables thoroughly before eating

No Public Health Risk

Greenfly – Salad vegetables, especially lettuce may have greenfly attached. This is becoming more common as the use of pesticides decreases, but they are not harmful.

Action: Wash all salad items thoroughly

No Public Health Risk

Mould Growth – Occurs when fruit & vegetables become bruised or damaged. This will be minimised if the buyer checks the produce before purchase and handles it carefully afterwards.

Action: Return to retailer

## PRE-WASHED & PACKAGED READY TO EAT FRUIT/VEGETABLES ETC.

Foreign Bodies - These products are processed and should not contain soil or extraneous matter.

Action: Contact Food Safety Team Possible Health Risk

## BEST BEFORE & USE BY DATES

The “best before” date on the product is the date recommended by the supplier/ manufacturer before which the product should be consumed. It is not an offence to sell a product after its’ “best before” date.

The “use by date” is a legal date after which the safety of the product cannot be guaranteed. It is an offence to sell a product after this date.

Action: Best Before Date- No Public Health Risk- Contact the retailer

Use by Date- Contact Food Safety Team

## 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 and is not harmful.

Action: Return to retailer

No Public Health Risk

Sugar Crystals – Large sugar crystals can form in confectionery and may be mistaken for glass. Sugar crystals will dissolve in warm water, glass will not dissolve.

Action: Public Health Risk if glass -Contact Food Safety Team

No Public Health Risk if crystals-

Contact the manufacturer

## BAKERY GOODS

Bakery Char - Bread and cakes may contain bits of overcooked dough, which has flaked off bakery tins. It does not necessarily indicate poor hygiene although they may be mistaken for rodent droppings, which are black and regular torpedo shaped, whilst bakery char is greyish and uneven in shape.

Action: Contact Manufacturer

No Public Health Risk

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

Action: Contact Manufacturer

No Public Health Risk



## FOOD COMPLAINTS

**This leaflet highlights some common food complaints together with a short explanation and suggestions for the best course of action.**

**Food Officers are trained to investigate food complaints and assess the risks to health. If you need any advice please contact us. We'll be happy to help.**

**PLEASE NOTE FOOD SAFETY OFFICERS DO NOT GET INVOLVED IN COMPENSATION ISSUES**

**Tel: (01446) 709105**

**E-mail:**

**regserv@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk**

## TINNED FOODS

Insects – Occasionally, small grubs may be discovered in canned vegetables especially sweetcorn and tomatoes. The grubs are larvae of a moth, which lives inside the sweetcorn kernel or tomato, and are impossible to see before they are processed. Although it isn't pleasant to find a grub in your food, they are killed and sterilised by the canning process. As the use of pesticides decreases, these types of problems will increase.

Action: [Contact the manufacturer](#)  
No Public Health Risk

Wasps & Fruit Flies – These are naturally associated with fruit and so can be found in tins of fruit & fruit products e.g., jam, purees, fruit yoghurts etc.

Action: [Contact the manufacturer](#)  
No Public Health Risk

Struvite – Some naturally occurring elements in fish may develop hard crystals during the canning process. The crystals can resemble broken glass, they are not harmful and will be broken down by stomach acid if swallowed. Struvite crystals are especially common in tinned salmon and will dissolve if placed in vinegar and gently heated for 15-20 mins. Glass will not dissolve.

Action: [Public Health Risk if glass- Contact the Food Safety Team](#)  
[No Public Health Risk if struvite Contact the manufacturer](#)

Mould – Dented, damaged or incorrectly processed tins may allow mould growth to occur. Similarly, cartons used to sell fruit juice etc., may become damaged at some point. Damaging to the packaging seal may allow air to enter the product & mould to grow. This could indicate an error in production or storage.

Action: [Contact the Food Safety Team](#)

## FISH

Codworm – white fish such as cod or haddock may be infested with a small, round brownish/yellow worm 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 missed.

Action: [Contact retailer or supplier](#)  
No Public Health Risk

Curd found in Tinned Salmon –Occasionally, white material resembling coagulated egg white may be found on the surface of flesh or embedded in the cavities between pieces of fish. The “curd” is a protein like material, which is present in raw salmon flesh and may separate out after cooking. The presence of the protein presents no public health risk.

Action: [None- No Public Health Risk](#)

## MEAT & POULTRY

Skin, small bone fragments etc - 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. They may sometimes cause problems such as a chipped tooth and such problems are best dealt with by the individual.

Action: [Contact retailer or supplier](#)  
No Public Health Risk

Large bone fragments -These may pose a health hazard.

Action: [Contact Food Safety Team](#)  
Potential Public Health Risk

Fresh/ Frozen Poultry– From time to time areas of brown/ purple discolouration (bruising) may be found in the meat. This is caused by damage to the bird before slaughter and is not always possible to be seen before the meat is cut.

Action: [Contact retailer or supplier](#)

## DRIED FOODS

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

Action: [Throw away all affected food, thoroughly clean/wash down cupboards with water & Suitable detergent and dry thoroughly.](#)  
[Store new dried foods in airtight containers.](#)  
[Ensure good ventilation in kitchen/store cupboards.](#)  
[Contact Pest Control department for advice.](#)

Insects (weevils, beetles, moths, larvae etc) – Dried products can be infested with insects as a result of poor harvesting, inappropriate transport and storage conditions before and after sale. The food safety team will investigate insect food complaints providing the problem is discovered when first opening the product packaging and the durability date hasn't expired.

Action: [Contact Food Safety Team for advice](#)  
Minimal Public Health Risk

## DAIRY PRODUCTS

Crystals in Cheese –Crystals can appear naturally in some cheeses, particularly hard, matured or vintage cheese. They are Calcium Lactate crystals and may be mistaken for glass. There is no health risk associated with Calcium Lactate crystals, as they are part of the natural make up of the cheese.

Action: [Public Health Risk if glass -Contact Food Safety Team](#)  
[No Public Health Risk if calcium lactate crystals- Contact the manufacturer](#)