

Common complaints about fish

The following is a list of common complaints about fish, which, due to the nature of the food and the processes involved, are sometimes unavoidable and would not result in us taking any formal action.

However, if you have any concerns about any suspect food, please do not hesitate to contact us.

I have opened a can of mackerel and it looks like there is broken glass inside, what should I do?

We sometimes receive complaints about 'glass crystals' in canned fish. If we look at these crystals more closely when dry, they look more like opaque crystals with dull edges. These could be **Struvite Crystals** (Pronounced Strew-vite)

Struvite is a chemical (magnesium ammonium phosphate or MAP) that can form during the canning process of some seafood (mackerel, salmon, tuna etc).

Occasionally this chemical can form into crystals which can be large enough to be visible and cause concern as they may resemble broken glass!

You can tell the difference between Struvite and glass by doing simple tests at home;

- Struvite crystals are softer than glass and can be scratched or crushed between two hard surfaces into a powder.
- Struvite crystals are soluble in a hot dilution of vinegar (or lemon juice) and water

Struvite crystals are harmless, and occur in many foods, in fact the chemicals found in Struvite crystal are valuable nutrients. The formation of Struvite cannot be prevented completely.

The crystals are easily digested, do not smell or taste and are too soft to do any harm.

I have bought fish and chips and I have found a worm in the fish. What is it?

Fish are commonly affected by parasitic round worms, the worms can be white, grey, cream or brown in colour. The worms are usually found in the gut or liver of the fish which is removed by gutting. However, sometimes the worms can penetrate into the flesh of the fish. There is no evidence to

suggest that the worm causes illness in man. The worms are killed by cooking or freezing. The number of fish infected is very small in relation to the thousand of tonnes of fish landed each year.

As these harmless worms are naturally found in fish and are difficult to spot in a raw fish, there is little legal action that we could take. We suggest that you take the fish back to the shop. They are not obliged to give you a refund however most businesses are concerned to find that you are not happy with their food and will try to resolve the problem.

Bones in Fish

I have bought filleted fish fingers (which claim to be boneless) and my child found a bone in it. What should I do?

Fish naturally contain bones. Whilst the manufacturers take every care to remove these bones a few may remain due to the way that the fish fingers are manufactured. As long as the manufacturer has taken **all reasonable steps** to remove the bones, then we can take no formal action.

A factory producing 3 million fish fingers a day, that's 3000 per minute, cannot possibly check every single fish finger whilst supplying the demand for fish fingers and keeping their prices at a level that the customers are willing to pay!

Bones from a certain part of the fish may resemble a piece of plastic, being broad, flat and flexible in appearance. We can do a simple laboratory test that will confirm whether it is bone.

Glow in the dark seafood

I have bought some prawns and they glow when I turn the light off, are they radioactive?

No. Prawns, crabs, fish and other seafood can sometimes appear to glow in the dark with a greenish-white light. This can be very alarming but is due to naturally occurring luminous bacteria! Light is produced by a reaction with a substance in the bacteria, oxygen and water, similar to the reaction which makes fireflies glow. We recommend that you take the food back to the shop where you bought it.