

## What is continuity of evidence?

If you are thinking of reporting a problem with food that you have bought, there are certain things that we have to know before we can start an investigation. Most of the information that we will need relates to the history of the food since you bought it at the shop.

- Where did you buy the food?
- Date, time and price of purchase?
- Was there anyone with you when you bought it (witness)?
- Do you have a receipt
- What did you do after you bought it; did you take it straight home in the car, or did you go somewhere else before going home?
- Where did you store the food when you got it home?
- Did you open it, use some and then put it back in the cupboard/freezer etc?
- Did you mix it with something else to cook or serve it?
- Date, time and place where you discovered that there was something wrong with the food?
- Was there anyone with you when you found that there was something wrong with the food?
- Did you eat any of the food?

We will require all of this information to decide whether there is 'continuity of evidence'

Continuity of evidence is a term used to describe whether there is sufficient evidence to show that the foreign body was in the food when it left the factory or the restaurant's kitchen.

We are not trying to say that you deliberately put the foreign body in at home, but we are trying to prove that it didn't enter accidentally in your home. If there is any doubt i.e. if a packet of cereal had been open in your cupboard for a few days, then you find insects in it, we would be unable to prove that the insects were there when it was manufactured.

More examples where there is NO continuity of evidence

- A takeaway that you have served up onto a plate with other dishes, you then find the foreign body

- A fly found in a cheese salad sandwich that you made at home. The fly could have been in the bread, the cheese, the salad or could even have been in your kitchen when you were making the sandwich.