

## HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

There are two ways of making a complaint to the Environmental Health Service

- Contact the local Environmental Health office directly or
- Contact the Food Safety Authority of Ireland on Lo call 1890 336677 or via their website [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie). They will in turn pass your complaint onto the relevant EH office.



## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- An investigation will be carried out on foot of your complaint which may include an inspection of the premises.
- Due to legal constraints information gained by virtue of inspections carried out following complaints cannot normally be disclosed.
- The HSE does not make any commitment as to whether or not a prosecution will be taken as a result of a complaint.
- In the event of a prosecution, you may be requested to appear in court as a witness,
- The HSE will not seek any compensation on your behalf. If you wish to seek compensation you will need to pursue civil legal action on your own behalf.
- Where applicable the EHO will contact you to inform you that an investigation into the complaint has occurred.

For further information on food safety issues please contact your local Environmental Health Officer or log on to [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie) or [www.safefoodonline.ie](http://www.safefoodonline.ie)



HSE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH

**FOOD  
COMPLAINTS**

Have you ever found.....

- a stone in your scone?
- a slug in your sandwich?
- or a fly in your soup?

If you have experienced any of the above and are curious – read on!

The above are just three examples of the many food complaints dealt with by Environmental Health Officers in the Health Service Executive every year.



## WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE A COMPLAINT

Food premises are inspected by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) working for the HSE. As part of their daily duties, EHOs deal with many food complaints from members of the public. It is very important if you have a complaint regarding a food business that it is brought to the attention of the Environmental Health Service, so that it can be investigated. If other people report similar problems with a premises or a product your report may help highlight an ongoing lapse in food safety.

## WHAT IS A FOOD COMPLAINT?

There are three types of contamination which may occur in a foodstuff. These are

1. Physical Contamination, such as foreign objects e.g. glass, insects etc
2. Chemical Contamination where the food may have been contaminated by chemicals, e.g. disinfectants, detergents etc.
3. Microbiological Contamination, where food may smell, look or taste 'off' or which may cause illness after eating e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea etc

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you suspect you have bought contaminated food and are considering making a complaint the following points should be observed:

- Keep the food in its original packaging
- Don't throw away any of the food or packaging
- Keep perishable food in the fridge and frozen foods in the freezer
- Don't handle or pull out any foreign objects found in the food
- Don't put food in a place where further deterioration or contamination could take place
- Keep all receipts in relation to the food
- Make a note of - where and when the food was bought and when it was opened for use
- Contact your local Environmental Health office as soon as possible.

You may be requested to deliver the food complaint to your local Environmental Health office where further investigation will take place.

If in the professional judgement of the EHO the complaint is not warranted you will be told.

If the complaint is considered to warrant further investigation the sample will be sealed and may be sent to a Public Analyst/ Public Health laboratory for analysis.

The laboratory test is a free service provided by the HSE. The result is available on request for a fee.

It is important to note that food submitted as part of a complaint becomes the property of the HSE.