



# Complaints about Food Safety

## What to do if you suspect a problem or become ill

### Complaints about food or food businesses

The Department of Health and Human Services works with other government agencies to help ensure food sold to Tasmanians is safe to eat.

Complaints about food or food businesses are an important way for us to hear about problems and to improve food safety in Tasmania.

Investigations of food complaints are initially undertaken by the local council in whose municipal area the food was bought. Complaints may then be referred to other government agencies depending on the type of food and where it was made.

The Department and local councils will investigate complaints about:

- foodborne illness
- foreign objects (e.g. insects, glass, rocks, metal, plastic) or other contaminants in food
- poor food handling practices
- unsuitable or unsafe ingredients
- incorrect labelling (e.g. allergen information, use by dates).

We will not:

- act on your behalf for reimbursement of food costs, compensation or for

damages – instead contact the food business directly or seek legal advice

- investigate complaints on poor customer service – direct these to the food business or Tasmania’s Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading on 1300 65 44 99.

### What should I do if I suspect a problem?

If you suspect a problem with the safety or labelling of a food or food business **you should contact the local council in whose area the food was purchased**. For location and contact details of councils in Tasmania see the Local Government Association of Tasmania website ([www.lgat.tas.gov.au/page.aspx?u=221](http://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/page.aspx?u=221)).

Do not eat the food product you are concerned about. Where possible, keep the food in its original container and store according to the directions provided on the food label. Depending on the issue, the food may be required as evidence or for analytical testing.

When reporting the problem, you will need to provide:

- your name, address and contact details (phone or email)
- a brief description of the problem
- the name and location of the store where the food was bought

- the time and date of purchase
- the brand name, product name, manufacturer or importer details
- the size and type of packaging
- the best before or use by date, or the batch identification code
- details about any leftover product you have (e.g. how much is left, where it is stored, etc.)
- for food service (such as restaurants, take-aways and caterers), details of all food and drink consumed.

### **What should I do if I become ill?**

If you or someone under your care becomes ill, it is important to seek early medical attention. Tell your doctor if you think your illness is related to food you have eaten.

Your doctor will assess your illness and may do tests to determine the cause. The results of the tests may be sent to the Department of Health and Human Services. The Department monitors foodborne illnesses to identify

patterns and connections between them and will conduct an investigation to determine the cause where appropriate.

Remember that your foodborne illness may not have been caused by the last meal you ate - symptoms can take hours or even days to appear. You should consider all foods consumed within at least three days of becoming ill. Also, other (non-food) sources can cause vomiting and diarrhoea, such as exposure to contaminated water while swimming, contact with animals and person-to-person spread.

For further information and advice call the Public Health Hotline on Freecall 1800 671 738 or email [pop.health@dhhs.tas.gov.au](mailto:pop.health@dhhs.tas.gov.au)

Food safety – Public and Environmental Health

[www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/food\\_safety](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/food_safety)

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