



Food safety advice



ADVICE ON PREPARING CAKES AT HOME



Food safety advice

Before you get started make sure you have considered the following:

1. REGISTRATION

Your home will need to be registered with the Council as a food business. This is free, but it is a legal requirement and you can be prosecuted if you do not register before starting. You can register online here: <https://register.food.gov.uk/new/coventry>

2. PLANNING PERMISSION

You may need planning permission to run a business from home. Take a look here for further information:

www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/56/working_from_home

3. BUSINESS RATES

You may have to pay increased rates if you use part of your property for a business. Contact the Revenues Section of the council on 024 7683 2525.

4. INSURANCE

Just in case things go wrong, we strongly recommend you to take out insurance to cover claims against you (third party insurance) in the same way as any other business. Unfortunately this can be quite expensive. You should consult your solicitor or insurance agent about this.

5. RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

Especially in older properties, you may find that the deeds contain clauses that prevent you from carrying out certain activities, and running a food business may be one of them. You should consult your own solicitor about this.



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6. MORTGAGE RESTRICTIONS

If you have a mortgage on your property you must contact your lender and talk to them about your intentions.

7. FOOD SAFETY LAW

The laws on food safety apply in the same way to a business run from home as they do to all other commercial premises. You will be liable to regular inspections by officers from the Council's environmental health service, and you may face legal action if you are found to be breaking the food hygiene laws. This also applies if you use a kitchen somewhere else to prepare food, for example a village or community hall kitchen.

In addition you must also meet the requirements of the Food Labelling Regulations 1996. These Regulations state that all pre-packed foods must be labelled with certain information relating to ingredients, name of producer, sell by dates etc. Further advice on these requirements can be sourced from Trading Standards.



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THE INSPECTION

Catering from home falls under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. These Regulations lay down the requirements relating to persons engaged in the handling of food, the methods and practices used in food businesses and structural matters in food premises.

This is broken down into three areas: [Management](#), [Hygiene](#) and [Structure](#)

The standards you will have to meet depend upon a number of factors such as the type and quantity of food you intend to prepare, and what else the kitchen is used for, however the following has been produced as a guide on what is expected in most cases to meet the requirements of food law.

MANAGEMENT

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

All food businesses are required to think about how you will prevent the food that you prepare from being contaminated and ensure it is safe to eat. Contamination falls into three categories: Chemical; Physical and Microbiological.

Hazard	Example
Chemical Contamination	Using cleaning materials that are not 'food safe' / storing chemicals around food
Microbiological Contamination	Not cooking food properly / leaving high risk food (such as fresh cream) out at room temperature / storing baked goods below raw foods causing cross contamination
Physical Contamination	Items falling into bakes (hair/nail varnish) / poor structure of the kitchen (peeling paint/damaged sink seals) / pest control



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You are required to have a simple written system in place which shows how you will control these problems. The Food Safety team have produced a short document which you can use to meet this requirement. Complete the blanks in this document to form a food safety management system.

TRACEABILITY

You need to make sure that you can show where all of your ingredients have come from and where your cakes have gone to. Keep hold of all receipts for ingredients brought and keep a record of your customers and dates sold.



TRAINING

The law requires you to have suitable and sufficient knowledge to ensure that you prepare food safely. You may wish to undertake a food hygiene training course to help achieve this. Courses can be done online or in person.

USE BY/BEST BEFORE DATES

Cakes and biscuits sold in supermarkets are often full of preservatives and may have been specially packed to allow the products to have an extended shelf life.

Best before/use by dates can only be established by microbiological testing of a product.

As this is something which is costly, we suggest a short shelf life erring on the side of caution. Whilst this is a low risk product, there could be mould growth and loss of cake quality. You may wish to do some trials (taste and quality) which will help you to confirm this, although you must bear in mind the fact that you can not see bacteria. As a general rule, we would recommend that products are given a shelf life of day of production +2.



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HYGIENE

SINKS AND HAND WASHING

Most people do not have a separate wash hand basin in their kitchen. You must ensure that you do however have "adequate facilities for the cleaning of utensils and maintaining adequate personal hygiene".

If you are fortunate enough to be having a new kitchen or sink fitted, we recommend that you install a 1½ or double sink unit. One of these units can then be designated solely for hand washing.



If you only have one sink, you need to consider how you can meet this requirement.

As you will be using your sink in your household's day to day activities, you must ensure that before you start undertaking any baking that you thoroughly clean and disinfect the sink, taps and surrounding area. It can then be used for hand washing whilst you bake.

If utensils are washed in the sink, you must ensure that again the procedure for cleaning and sanitising the sink after use are implemented.

NOROVIRUS AND FITNESS TO WORK

You do not want to be the cause of an outbreak of norovirus or food poisoning (sickness and diarrhoea illness) at a function you have prepared cakes for!

If you suffer from sickness and/or diarrhoea you must ensure that you are symptom free (no sickness and/or diarrhoea) for 48 hours before you undertake any baking or cake preparation.

Take the time to consider now what you would do if you had a large order to fulfil and came down ill.





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HIGH RISK BAKING

Although most cakes and biscuits are classed as low risk products, some fillings and finishes are more high risk. Fresh cream, some cheese cakes and royal icing made from raw egg whites are all high risk and require extra thought to ensure they are prepared safely.



Cakes that require refrigeration must be kept at or below 8°C at all times with limited time out of temperature control (maximum 4 hours in total).

Royal icing is traditionally produced using raw egg whites. This method can still be used, however we would recommend that lion marked eggs are used, and that these products are not given to vulnerable groups (the young, elderly or pregnant). You can now purchase pasteurised dried egg whites or pasteurised royal icing mixes which remove this risk.



FRIDGE

Any items being kept in the fridge must be stored in a way which does not cause contamination. Raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables must be stored below ready to eat foods at all times.



You must ensure that your fridge is well organised and running at a temperature of 8°C or below. Use a fridge thermometer to check the temperature regularly.

Don't overload your fridge. The efficiency of the fridge will suffer if the cooling air circulating within it cannot flow freely.

Keep the fridge door closed as much as possible. Leaving the fridge door open raises the temperature.

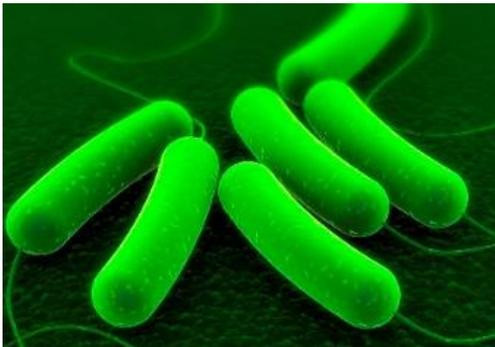
If you prepare a large amount of food that needs to be kept in the fridge you may need a separate fridge which is only used for your business.



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E-COLI

Making cakes is a low risk activity, however if you prepare raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables in your home you could be causing an e-coli risk. You must take care when preparing your food at home to ensure that raw meat is never prepared on the same surfaces as ready to eat foods.



You must make sure that before you begin work that your kitchen is prepared to be your "working kitchen". This will generally mean removing anything not required in the kitchen and thoroughly cleaning and sanitising the surfaces.

E. coli bacteria and other food poisoning bacteria can grow on the tiniest food source on a dirty work surface. Proper cleaning and sanitising should also remove all the bacteria from surfaces and equipment involved in food preparation.

CLEANING CHEMICALS



You must ensure that you have appropriate cleaning chemicals to keep the kitchen clean and sanitise surfaces and equipment. Antibacterial sprays and sanitisers should meet a certain British Standard (BS EN: 1276 or 13697) if you are unsure whether your current sprays meet this requirement you may wish to visit: www.disinfectant-info.co.uk

Different types of disinfectants require different dilutions and contact times. These are specified and validated by the manufacturer and you must follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time to ensure the product is effective.



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STRUCTURE

YOUR KITCHEN

You must ensure that the structure of your kitchen is kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition as to avoid the risk of contamination.

Walls	need to be a smooth impervious finish (for example tiled or smooth plaster painted with a gloss or silk vinyl paint)
Floors	need to be smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material (for example sealed lino or sealed floor tiles with water proof joints)
Ceiling	need to be smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material

TOILETS

Toilets should not open directly into your kitchen. However in some houses, such as those built in Victorian times the toilet leads straight from the kitchen and can not be avoided. In these situations you must ensure that the toilet is well ventilated and the door to the toilet kept shut. People should not use the toilet whilst you are baking.

VENTILATION

You must ensure that you have adequate ventilation in place in the kitchen to prevent condensation, mould growth, and damage to decoration – but make sure open windows don't create a problem with flies and pests!





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EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be in good condition and not be a potential source of contamination due to its condition or cleanliness.

All equipment should be carefully cleaned, sanitised and stored. You must regularly check equipment and repair/replace anything damaged.

PEST CONTROL

You must ensure that your kitchen is always pest free. This can be achieved with regular checking of the kitchen for evidence of pests (droppings/nibbled food). Making sure that no food is left out and that the kitchen is kept in a clean condition at all times.

Any signs of pest activity should be treated straight away. It is a good idea to record any problems you have and what you did about the problem.

STORAGE

You need to ensure that at all stages of storage, production and delivery the cakes that you produce are free from microbiological, chemical and physical contamination.

Storing equipment, tins and ingredients should be kept separately from your day to day items wherever possible. Lidded containers are useful for preventing contaminants falling into tins/equipment whilst it is being stored.

Food in the fridge should be wrapped/covered to prevent items falling/dripping onto others.





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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

PETS

Having pets is absolutely fine! However you must consider this as part of how you prevent any animal hair etc from ending up in the food you prepare.

Pets must not be allowed in the kitchen when you are preparing food.

All surfaces/equipment that they may have come into contact with must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to you beginning a baking session.



WASHING MACHINES

A common query is that of having a washing machine in the kitchen. We understand that washing machines are generally in domestic kitchens, you therefore need to consider this and ensure that no washing is undertaken at the same time as you prepare food for the business.

EDIBLE DECORATIONS

The Food Standards Agency have issued guidance on the use of glitters and dusts on cakes. Only glitter or dust clearly labelled as 'edible' should be applied to food for consumption. Further advice can be found on the FSA website:

www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/faq/edibleglitter

and

www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2014/may/glitter-and-dust



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EGGS

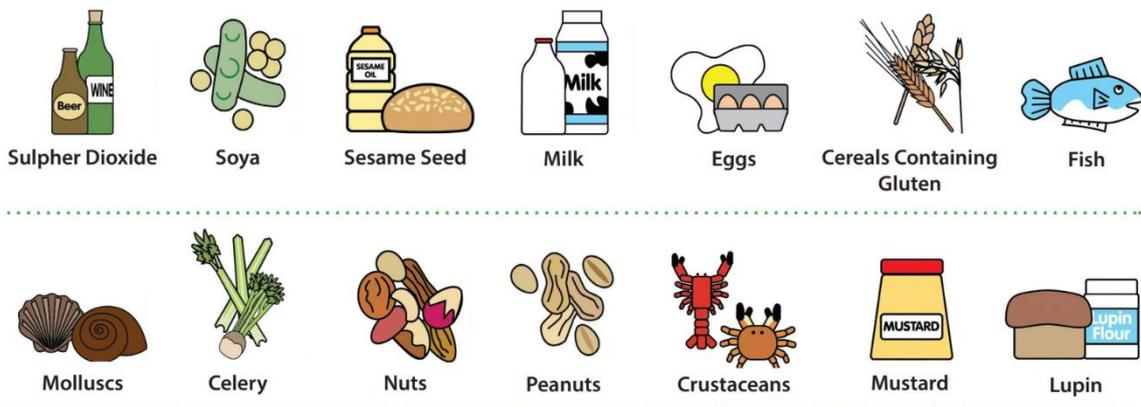
We all know that cake makers prefer to use eggs that are at room temperature. It is best to keep eggs in the fridge and to get them out a few hours prior to baking to bring them up to room temperature. Leaving eggs out at room temperature in your kitchen exposes the eggs to lots of changes in temperature, keeping them in the fridge keeps them at a constant temperature.



Eggs which are Lion Marked meet a specific safety standard. We recommend that you use eggs with this marking.

FOOD INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2014

From 13th December 2014, it is a legal requirement for all caterers to provide information if any of the foods/ingredients listed below are used:



Further advice can be found here:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources#toc-2>

If you decide to make specifically allergen free products, you must ensure that there is no cross contamination from other ingredients/equipment/packaging.

Remember - You must legally be able to provide customers with the information about the 14 allergenic ingredients in your food, if you do not feel that you can confidently, and safely provide them with an allergen free product, you are not obliged to take the order.