

K-State Extension Connection

Even Without Eggs, Eating Uncooked Dough Can Be a Raw Deal

Barbara L. Ames

Wildcat District Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

You have probably heard it's a bad idea to eat uncooked dough because it contains raw eggs. But did you know that raw flour can also make you very sick?

During the holiday season as we are baking our family favorite cookies, tasting that cookie dough can seem like the natural thing to do. However, Londa Nwadike, Extension Food Safety Specialist, urges people to resist the temptation to taste uncooked batter or dough, no matter how delicious it might be.



“Bacteria from animal waste and other sources can contaminate grain in fields or throughout the grain transportation and flour production system,” Nwadike says. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, flour from milled grain is typically not treated to kill bacteria.

“That means it's not safe to eat until properly cooked,” she added.

You might have licked cake batter or cookie dough from spoons lots of times with no ill effects. But some haven't been so lucky.

In 2016, more than 60 people grew sick from E. coli bacteria linked to contaminated raw flour, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 10 million pounds of flour and flour-containing products were recalled, including bread, pastry, and pancake mixes.

What about cookie dough ice cream? Food safety experts say commercially purchased cookie dough ice cream should be safe because it contains heat-treated flour and pasteurized eggs. But that might not be true of store-bought cookie dough for baking. A 2009 outbreak traced to prepackaged raw cookie dough sickened 72 people; many of them were hospitalized.

“Bacteria have changed over the years, so they may be more likely to cause ill effects now than in the past,” Nwadike says.

The FDA offers safety tips for preparing cookies, pies, cakes and other foods containing flour:

- Don't eat uncooked dough, batter or other foods containing raw flour.
- Be sure children don't eat or taste dough used in crafts.
- Make sure foods containing flour are cooked to the proper temperature. Follow recipes or package directions.
- As with raw meat, keep raw flour or eggs separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Clean bowls, utensils, countertops and other surfaces thoroughly after use.
- Wash hands often.

Suggested final internal product temperatures for baked goods are as follows:

- Layer cakes: 205-210 degrees F
- Pound cake: 210 degrees F
- Jellyroll cakes: 190-195 degrees F
- Muffins: 210 degrees F
- Quick bread: 210 degrees F
- Yeast bread: 195-210 degrees F
- Bundt cake: 212 degrees F
- Yeast rolls: 190-195 degrees F

Find more information about these programs and others, by contacting the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district.

###

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.