

Mustard ingredients and peanut contamination - guidance for businesses

Food businesses are responsible for establishing whether any of their food products are affected and taking steps to ensure consumers are protected, and the food they sell is safe.

Background

FGS Ingredients Limited, who import mustard as an ingredient to manufacture spice products including curry powders, seasonings and spice blends, undertook a precautionary withdrawal of all their mustard product due to potential contamination with peanut. This has resulted in direct customers and businesses of FGS Ingredients Limited, as well as indirect and subsequent customers along the supply chain, to also withdraw products. Where implicated products have been sold at retail, food businesses have also been recalling products containing the implicated mustard.

These spices and blends are also used in products such as ready meals, sauces and snacks. The precautionary withdrawal/recall also includes products manufactured/supplied under the previous business trading name, 'Old India.'

What is the latest update?

Following extensive investigations by Leicester City Council, the enforcing Local Authority, and FGS Ingredients Limited, supported by the FSA and Food Standards Scotland (FSS), as well as checks on supply chains by retailers and manufacturers, the FSA is assured that actions taken in response to the initial food safety concerns have been addressed. There is no evidence that other mustard products that have not been supplied by FGS are affected.

The FSA is now advising people who have a peanut allergy that they can consume food that contains or may contain mustard, mustard powder, mustard seeds or mustard flour, both at home and when eating out.

We continue to advise food manufacturers and food businesses to review their food supply systems and remove any products that are affected by precautionary recalls from FGS Ingredients Limited. You can find the latest list of these products here:

- [Update 18 – Several brands recall products containing mustard because they may be contaminated with peanut](#)
- [Update 12 - FGS Ingredients Ltd recalls a number of products containing mustard powder because of undeclared peanuts](#)
- [Hain Daniels recalls Yorkshire Provender Jacket & Toast Toppers because of undeclared peanut](#)

What should my business do?

Food businesses are responsible for establishing whether any of their food products are affected. You should take steps to ensure the food you sell is safe and that consumers are protected. If individual business level investigations are ongoing in response to the contamination of mustard

products with peanut, these should continue.

If you have scrutinised your supply chain and you are confident that none of your products are affected by the FGS Ingredients Limited precautionary withdrawal, you can communicate this to your customers and advise that those with a peanut allergy can now eat products containing mustard from your business. You can also remove any temporary advice in place in response to contamination concerns.

If your business has been supplied with affected products from FGS Ingredients Limited, the original advice remains for products manufactured on or before 30 September 2024 and you should withdraw and/or recall the product. More details on how to do this is provided below.

Why are you still recalling mustard products if the advice to consumers has changed?

Food businesses have undertaken significant product withdrawals and recalls to remove products that may have been contaminated with peanut from the market. A high number of product recalls have been undertaken to alert consumers to the products affected.

Some businesses are continuing to scrutinise their supply chains and where they have identified that they have been supplied with the affected product, and that this product poses risks to consumers, they will continue to take action to protect consumers.

Where required, FGS Ingredients Limited are continuing to withdraw and recall all their mustard products because of the possibility that they may contain peanuts. These withdrawals and recalls are precautionary as it is not possible to identify individual products affected.

FGS Ingredients Limited are fulfilling a legal requirement for a 'precautionary principle' food safety approach, to ensure there's ongoing high level of health protection for consumers. After extensive food chain analysis and investigations by a wide range of food businesses across the food industry, the FSA is assured that there is no evidence that other mustard products that have not been supplied by FGS are affected. This is why we are changing our advice to consumers and advising them that they can now eat products containing mustard.

What should I do if I have been supplied with products included in the precautionary recall?

If your business has been supplied with a product that contains part of a wider batch from FGS Ingredients Limited that has been impacted, you should withdraw the product. If the product has been sold at retail, you should also recall the product that contains the mustard ingredient and inform your local authority. Local authorities are required to inform the FSA.

If the impacted product already has peanut listed as an ingredient with the appropriate allergen labelling or a 'may contain' statement on the label, these products will not need to be withdrawn or recalled, as the risk to consumers with a peanut allergy has already been highlighted.

Products can be relabelled if the business is able to do so and more information on this is provided in the question below.

Should I relabel products which contain the recalled ingredients from FGS Ingredients Limited?

Products not yet sold at retail can be relabeled with precautionary allergen labelling, or if in a hospitality setting the information can be updated at the point of service to accurately reflect that the product may contain peanuts. This is a standard approach, which is outlined in paragraph 42 of the Guidance on food traceability, withdrawals and recalls within the UK food industry.

Food businesses may choose to add [precautionary allergen labelling \(PAL\) statements](#) for peanuts to their products if they contain mustard supplied by FGS Ingredients Limited, as there is a risk of cross-contamination in the FGS Ingredients Limited supply chain. Before doing this, it is important to:

- check if the product(s) has peanut in its ingredients and is declared as an allergen on the label
- check whether the product has a precautionary allergen label for peanut already, for example a 'may contain' statement
- check if the product can be relabeled or over stickered
- for hospitality, check if the information provided at point of service can be updated to ensure it accurately informs the consumer that peanut may be present

Important: If after following these steps, accurate information cannot be provided, a product withdrawal/recall must take place and affected products must not be sold to consumers.

A customer has informed my business that they had an allergic reaction to the food we sold them. Is there anything different I should do in response to this incident?

No, the usual rules apply. You should notify your LA immediately. LAs have a statutory responsibility to inform the FSA incident teams of any allergic reactions that require hospital treatment (with or without admission) or in the event of a death, that's allegedly as a result of food consumption. Where possible, you should also encourage your customer to [report the matter directly to their LA](#).

We already took appropriate action when we were first advised. What else do we need to do now?

Even if food safety assessments were undertaken, and, where needed, action has already been undertaken in response to the initial advice, you should continue to check the latest updates to the precautionary recall, as these will contain additional products that may be affected and advice on food safety action. You need to determine whether action is needed in response to this new information. Similarly, you should continue to act on any new information from your suppliers, where product withdrawals are being undertaken. You can [sign up to receive recall alerts direct from the FSA](#).

Do I need to update my allergen matrix to include peanuts in any products containing mustard?

Food businesses may choose to add [precautionary allergen labelling \(PAL\) statements](#) to their products if they contain the implicated mustard supplied by FGS Ingredients Limited.

Where traceability has identified a product contains peanut, or is at risk of containing peanut, a food business should adapt their allergen matrix to make it clear that certain products may contain peanut. This can be communicated to the customers either verbally or in writing.

Should I be contacting my own suppliers to find out if their products are affected?

Yes, businesses should complete traceability exercises to identify products (or ingredients used in products) containing the implicated mustard that has come from FGS Ingredients Limited.

Can I label my products as ‘peanut-free’?

You can only use a ‘free-from’ allergen claims if you have guaranteed that the specified allergen is absent. To use it, you must enforce strict controls to eliminate any risk of cross-contamination.

There is no set regulatory threshold for peanut, so a product labelled ‘peanut-free’ must guarantee that peanut is absent from the product.

You can read the Food and Drink Federation’s [guidance on free-from claims](#) to find out more.

How long will I need to put in place these contingency plans?

Food businesses should continue to check for updates to the precautionary recall, as these will contain additional products that may be affected. You should continue to act on any new information from your suppliers where product withdrawals are being undertaken. The FSA and FSS will continue to liaise with the local authorities of the impacted businesses directly.

Previous guidance advised businesses to risk assess each product and check supply chain. This guidance changed to advise businesses to withdraw and recall products, regardless of risk assessment and testing results.

Going forward, can I now revert to risk assessing any mustard product from FGS Ingredients Limited?

No. Mustard products distributed and manufactured by FGS Ingredients Limited up to and including 30 September 2024 should be withdrawn and recalled as a precaution. The advice for implicated products remains unchanged.

Food sold or distributed by FGS Ingredients Limited from 01 October 2024 onward can be managed in the usual way. In the event of a potential food safety concern, including allergen contamination, routine approaches to ensure food is safe should be followed. Actions usually taken to address the food safety concern, consistent with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, (HACCP), and to meet legal requirements, should be undertaken in the usual way.

The food safety action advised in this case was different to the routine risk management advice when an allergy incident occurs. Does this mean the FSA and FSSs stance on actions needed when there is a food incident, or an allergen incident has now changed?

There has not been a change to guidance on actions that should be taken in the event of an allergen related food safety incident. Each incident is assessed on a case-by-case basis. The food safety approach undertaken in this incident should not be assumed to be a change in practice.

Where food businesses are unsure about the procedures to follow in the event of food safety concern, there are several options available. You should:

- refer to our [Guidance on food traceability, withdrawals and recalls within the UK food industry](#)
- seek the advice of your Local Authority
- if you are a member of a trade association, seek advice from them
- ensure the advice you rely on is from a reliable source