

## Handling Flour Safely: *What You Need to Know*



*Protect yourself and your family by following these safety tips when preparing foods that contain flour.*

Flour is a raw food. It may not look like a raw food, but it usually is, just like fresh tomatoes or carrots. The grains from which flour is ground are grown in fields and, like all foods grown outdoors, they may be exposed to a variety of harmful bacteria like *Salmonella* and pathogenic *E. coli*. The important things to know are:

- Flours most commonly used in home baking and cooking are made directly from raw grains.
- Processing these grains into flour does not kill harmful bacteria.
- Many foods made with flour also contain raw eggs, which may contain harmful bacteria.
- Cooking is the only way to be sure that foods made with flour and raw eggs are safe.
- **Never eat or taste raw flour, dough, or batter.**

### OUTBREAK

Since 2009 there have been several outbreaks of foodborne illness involving raw flour or raw flour-containing products like cake mixes and cookie dough. These have resulted in 168 known illnesses and 20 hospitalizations.

## Dos and Don'ts for Consumers

- Don't eat or allow children to eat or play with raw dough products made with any brand of flour or baking mix before cooking.
- Do follow package directions on baking mixes and other flour-containing products for correct cooking temperatures and specified times.
- If you have any recalled flour at home, throw it away.
- Don't let children use raw dough for crafts/play clay.
- Do keep all raw foods like flour and eggs separate from ready-to-eat foods. Remember, flour is a powder and spreads easily.
- Don't use products that contain raw flour, like cake mix to make milkshakes.
- Don't use raw cookie dough in ice cream (the cookie dough in ice cream sold in stores has been treated to kill harmful bacteria).
- Do refrigerate cookie and pastry dough according to package directions. Use a refrigerator thermometer to be sure your refrigerator is at a safe 40°F.
- Do clean up carefully after working with flour or raw dough and eggs:
  - o Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water, and,
  - o Wash utensils, bowls, baking pans, cutting boards, and countertops with warm, soapy water.

