

I recently checked out at one of our local grocery stores and found a recall notice was detailed at the bottom of the receipt for Gold Medal flour (more information below.) This isn't the first food recall notice that I have been made aware of. It seems that food recalls have become more prevalent in the past few months – or rather I have become more aware of them because I have signed up for automatic notices from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) so that I can be aware of the recalls impacting Geary County consumers.

The USDA defines a food recall as a voluntary action taken by a manufacturer or distributor to protect the public from products that may cause health problems or possible death. They are initiated by the manufacturer or distributor of food product, sometimes at the request of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) agency housed within USDA.

When there is reason to believe that a recall is necessary for a particular food or food ingredient, a FSIS recall committee makes recommendations to the company about the need for a recall. The committee also classifies the recall at one of three levels:

Class I recall – involves a health hazard situation in which there is *reasonable* probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death. The Gold Medal flour recall is a recent example of a Class I recall. This recall is the result of a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* 0121. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) explains that, although most strains of *E. coli* are harmless, others strains of *E. coli* can make you sick or even result in death. *E. coli* 0121 is one of those potentially deadly bacterium.

Class II recall – involves a potential health hazard situation in which there is a *remote* probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food. A recent example of this type of recall is that of the Grossglockner Inc. company that recalled pork products due to misbranding. The company inadvertently placed the incorrect ingredient label on the back of their “Banger Sausage” with an ingredient label for “Weiner Products.” The Banger sausages contain breadcrumbs formulated with wheat. Therefore, wheat is not declared and may cause allergic reactions in those allergic to wheat products.

Class III recall – involves a situation where eating the food will not cause adverse health consequences. These are the least serious type of recall. An example of this would be a product that may have been contaminated with small pieces of plastic during the manufacturing process.

I recently investigated a sunflower seed recall that was impacting the food availability in June for the Live Well Geary County Summer Picnic Parties program. The sunflower seeds originated from a single company. The company was a wholesale distributor that sold to a wide range of other food production companies that made snack mixes, salads, granola bars and other products that contained sunflower seeds. That particular recall was due to listeria being found in the sunflower seeds. For more information about the recent sunflower seed recall, you can access the June edition of the FCS Connection newsletter on the Geary County K-State Research and Extension

Website at: <http://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/fcs-connection-newsletter/2016.html>

The same scenario is unfolding with the General Mills flour products as they sale to other food manufacturers that use the flour in products such as breaded chicken patties or cake mixes. Illnesses have occurred in consumers from several different states. Most of the cases are linked to folks who have eaten the flour under- or uncooked (i.e. cookie dough, bread dough and the like.)

Food recalls are important for consumers to be aware of but not to the point of questioning every food product they purchase. Our U.S. food system is one of the safest in the world. The USDA and the Food Safety and Inspection Service works hard to ensure that our nation's meat, poultry, egg products, and food processing practices follow strict food safety guidelines and statutory food regulations.

As a consumer, your responsibilities for food safety include following safe food handling practices:

- 1) Wash your hands with warm water and soap before handling any food
- 2) Keep cooked food away from raw food and wash any surfaces raw food comes in contact with.
- 3) Put leftovers away within two hours of preparation – preferably right after meal service.
- 4) Make sure foods are cooked to the proper internal temperatures before consuming them.

For more information on consumer food safety and food recalls, contact me at the Geary County Extension office at 238-4161. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!



Gold Medal Flour Recall Information:

2 pound *Gold Medal* All Purpose Flour – Package UPC 000-16000-10710
Recalled Better if Used by Dates 15MAY2017KC through 05JUN2017KC, 11JUN2017KC, 12JUN2017KC, 13JUN2017KC, 14JUN2017KC, 18JUN2017KC, 01AUG2017KC, 13AUG2017KC through 21AUG2017KC

4.25 pound *Gold Medal* All Purpose Flour – Package UPC 000-16000-12670
Recalled Better if Used by Dates 21MAY2017KC, 03JUN2017KC, 01AUG2017KC, 19AUG2017KC, 20AUG2017KC, 21AUG2017KC

5 pound *Gold Medal* All Purpose Flour – Package UPC 000-16000-10610
Recalled Better if Used by Dates 15MAY2017KC through 25MAY2017KC, 27MAY2017KC thru 31MAY2017KC, 01JUN2017KC, 03JUN2017KC through 05JUN2017KC, 11JUN2017KC through 14JUN2017KC, 18JUN2017KC, 01AUG2017KC, 13AUG2017KC through 21AUG2017KC



Related Betty Crocker Cake Mix Recalls:

Betty Crocker Delights Super Moist Party Rainbow Chip Cake Mix – Package
UPC 000-16000-40997

Recalled Better if Used by Dates 25MAR2017, 28MAR2017, 27APR2017, 28APR2017,
23MAY2017, 24MAY2017, 25MAY2017

Betty Crocker Delights Super Moist Carrot Cake Mix – Package UPC 000-16000-
40987

Recalled Better if Used by Dates 12APR2017, 13APR2017, 14APR2017, 28MAY2017,
29MAY2017, 30MAY2017, 07JUL2017, 08JUL2017

Betty Crocker Super Moist Rainbow Bit Cake Mix – Package UPC 000-65633-
46589

Recalled Better if Used by Dates 27AL2017, 08JN2017, 09JN2017

For additional General Mills flour recall information/products, go to:
<http://www.generalmills.com/flour>