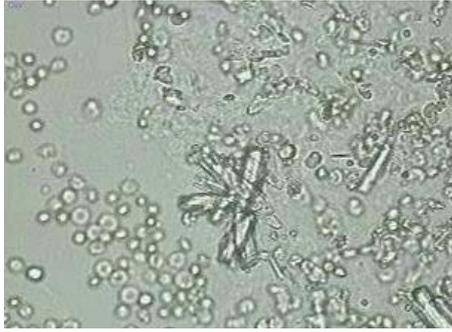


Food Complaints – Struvite



Glass Found in Tinned Fish?

We are occasionally contacted after people find a piece of “glass” in tinned fish, notably salmon, tuna, mackerel, shrimps, etc. This is actually a natural compound known as “Struvite” which is harmless.

What is Struvite?

Struvite is colourless, transparent, crystals often confused for glass or plastic found in tins of fish.

How does it get in the can?

Naturally occurring elements in fish can develop into crystals during the heating and canning process. They are a harmless compound of magnesium ammonium phosphate, and will be broken down naturally by the stomach acids if eaten.

How do I tell if it is Struvite?

Struvite appears to look like glass but if examined with a magnifying glass, the edges are smooth, where broken glass will be irregular. Also Struvite is softer than glass and can be scratched. If the crystal is crushed it will usually break into smaller crystals or powder. If you're still not sure that the crystal is Struvite then a simple test is to try to dissolve the crystals in some warm acid (vinegar or lemon juice). Struvite will dissolve whereas glass will not. This also proves that the crystals will dissolve in the stomach and are not a health risk.

Is it a serious problem?

When you think about the enormous volume of seafood products packed each year, finding Struvite is actually quite rare. As yet no procedure has been successful in preventing it happening, even the addition of polyphosphates is not 100% effective and most people do not want any more additives in food.

What shall I do next?

If the crystal does not dissolve or crush, then it could be glass. If so then please contact us.

If it is Struvite we would advise you to eat the product as normal, but if you are still concerned please contact the manufacturer.

For further information please contact
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