PUT DOWN THE COOKIE DOUGH

It’s not just the eggs that will make you sick.

“There’s no treatment to effectively make sure there’s no bacteria in the flour.”

- Martin Wiedmann, food safety professor at Cornell University

---

**Problem**

Problem(s): Sickness from eating raw cookie dough, flour recall

When: After a long day

Where: Different, unusual, unique

Facility, site: Your kitchen

Contaminant: Shiga toxin-Escherichia coli producing O121

Task being performed: Making cookies (or, let’s be honest, just the dough)

Impact to the Goals

- Safety Goal: Risk of contracting salmonella
- Environmental Goal: Flour contaminated with E. coli
- Property Goal: 45 million pounds of flour recalled

Frequency: 46 cases since December 21, 2015

---

**Analysis**

Basic Level Cause Map - Start with simple Why questions.

- Safety Goal Impacted
  - Risk of contracting E. coli
  - Raw flour contains E. coli

- Basic Cause-and-Effect
  - Raw eggs contain salmonella
  - Eggs exposed to salmonella

More Detailed Cause Map - Add detail as information becomes available.

- Why? Effect → Cause
  - NOTE: Read the Cause Map from left to right with the phrase "Was Caused By" in place of each arrow.

- Safety Goal Impacted
  - Risk of contracting E. coli
  - Raw dough contains raw eggs
  - Cookie dough contains raw eggs
  - Cookie dough contains contaminated, raw flour
  - Raw flour contains E. coli

- Environmental Goal Impacted
  - Raw flour distributed contaminated with E. coli
  - E. coli not effectively treated prior to recall

- Property Goal Impacted
  - 45 million pounds of flour recalled

---

**Solutions**

Unfortunately health professionals have been clear that they’re not getting far on keeping birds from pooping in fields, nor is there some sort of miracle treatment that will ensure raw flour is safe from disease. (Scientists underscore that flour isn’t less safe, it’s just that we are becoming more aware of the risks. Says Wiedmann, “Our food is getting safer, but also our ability to detect problems is getting better.”)

The only way to reduce your risk of getting sick from raw cookie dough is . . . not to eat it at all. Also, wash your hands whenever you handle flour.

---

**Cause Mapping**

Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

**Step 1.** Problem: What’s the Problem?

**Step 2.** Analysis: Why did it happen?

**Step 3.** Solutions: What will be done?

---

For a free copy of our Root Cause Analysis Template in Microsoft Excel, used to create this page, visit our website.

ThinkReliability.com

Copyright ThinkReliability 2016

---