

Acrylamide in Food: What you need to know.

Why do I need to know about Acrylamide in Food?

There are new Regulations EU 2017/2158 coming into force on the 11th April 2018 to control the amount of acrylamide in food.

What is acrylamide?

Acrylamide is formed naturally when asparagine (an amino acid) and sugars in certain foods are cooked above 120°C where there is low moisture. E.g. frying, grilling, roasting.

Acrylamide is mainly found in fried or baked carbohydrate rich foods e.g. cereals, potatoes and coffee beans.

Made Simple: If you fry, roast, grill starchy food and burn it acrylamide will be formed.

Why is this a problem?

Acrylamide causes cancer in animals and the European Food Standards Agency have carried out a risk assessment and believe that there could be a risk to human health.

Made Simple: It could cause cancer.

What do the new regulations require?

As a food business you are required to establish mitigation measures which identify food processing steps susceptible to the formation of acrylamide in foods and set out activities to reduce the levels of acrylamide in food stuff.

Made Simple: Just like your HACCP (Hazard analysis Critical Control Point), you need to look at what you cook, could it result in acrylamide? If yes, what can you do to avoid it or reduce it to a minimum?

What type of food do the regulations include?

The regulation affects all food businesses that produce and place on the market the following foods:

- French fries, other cut (deep fried) products and sliced potato crisps from fresh potatoes;
- Potato crisps, snacks, crackers and other potato products from potato dough;
- Bread;

- Breakfast cereals (excluding porridge);
- Fine bakery wares: cookies, biscuits, rusks, cereal bars, scones, cornets, wafers, crumpets and gingerbread, as well as crackers, crisp breads and bread substitutes. In this category a cracker is a dry biscuit (a baked product based on cereal flour);
- Coffee:
 - Roast coffee
 - Instant (soluble) coffee;
- Coffee substitutes;
- Baby food and, processed cereal-based food intended for infants and young children as defined in Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

How can businesses reduce the amount of acrylamide in food?

The regulations divide food businesses into manufactures, small retail food businesses and franchises, mitigation measures are adapted to the nature of their operation.

Made Simple: if you are a small independent food business e.g. local fish & chip shop. You will need to establish further measures to reduce the presence of acrylamide.

Note: This fact sheet is aimed for smaller caterers – If you are a small food manufacturer please contact info@simply-safer.co.uk

If you are a caterer, café, restaurant, independent Fish and Chip shop, this is what you need to do:

Potato Products:

- Choose a potato with a low sugar content!!! Made Simple: Use a reputable supplier.
- Do not except damages and bruised potatoes Again reputable supplier.
- Store Potatoes above 6°C.

Before Frying:

To reduce the sugar content of raw chips you can do one of the following:

- Wash and soak (30 mins. - 2 hours) in cold water. Rinse in cold water
- Soak for a few minutes in warm water- Rinse in cold water
- Blanching of potatoes reduces the levels of acrylamide.

(When using frozen chips follow the cooking instructions)

When frying Chips or potatoes:

- Use an oil that cooks quickly at lower temperatures. [Made Simple: Talk to your supplier.](#)
- Frying Temperatures should be below 175°C
- Maintain the quality of the oil by skimming fines and crumbs
- Go for Gold – Cook the until golden yellow – NOT BROWN.

Bread and Baked Products:

To reduce the amount of acrylamide in bread and baked products the baker should consider the following:

- Extend the yeast fermentation time
- Increase the moisture content of the dough
- Cook to a lighter colour – DO NOT produce a DARK crust.

Summary:

- Put very simply, safer food is when it is not burnt!
- When considering how you ensure the food you serve your customers is safe, consider how you can reduce the likelihood of acrylamide being produced.
- Write down your procedures (include in your HACPP) and ensure all relevant staff are made aware.
- If you need help call 07941421809 or email info@simply-safer.co.uk
 - www.simply-safer.co.uk