

The Kinder salmonella recall

From the sweeties.net wiki

In the weeks before Easter 2022, parents across Europe were told to check their cupboards. Kinder chocolate, including Kinder Surprise eggs, was being recalled because of salmonella, and the people falling ill were mostly young children.

The outbreak

In early April 2022, the European Food Safety Authority and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control began investigating what they called a rapidly evolving outbreak of monophasic *Salmonella* Typhimurium, a type of food poisoning bacteria. By 8 April, 150 confirmed and probable cases had been reported in nine European countries and the United Kingdom. Most cases were children under 10, and many were taken into hospital.

In Britain, the UK Health Security Agency and the public health bodies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland linked cases of salmonella poisoning to Ferrero products, working with the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland.

The factory

The chocolate was traced to Ferrero's factory at Arlon, in Belgium. On 8 April 2022 Belgium's food safety agency withdrew the factory's authorisation to produce. Ferrero recalled every batch of every product made there, whatever its date. Products were also recalled in Canada and the United States.

In the UK the recall covered Kinder Surprise in 20g, 20g x 3 and 100g sizes, Kinder Mini Eggs 75g, the Kinder Egg Hunt Kit 150g and Kinder Schokobons 200g. The Food Standards Agency's head of incidents, Tina Potter, said the agency welcomed Ferrero's precautionary approach and advised people not to eat any of the products listed.

What Ferrero knew

The key finding came in the official outbreak assessment published on 12 April. It found that in December 2021, months before the recall, salmonella had been detected in a buttermilk tank at the Belgian factory during the company's own checks. The company brought in hygiene measures and more testing, and after tests came back negative it went on distributing the chocolate across Europe and around the world. The chocolate went to more than 110 countries.

Reopening and apology

After the closure, Ferrero said more than 1,000 of its staff and independent specialists worked on the site. They carried out more than 1,800 quality tests, dismantled and cleaned 10,000 parts, replaced equipment and installed 300 metres of new pipeline. On 17 June 2022 the Belgian food safety agency gave conditional permission for production to restart. Ferrero's chief executive, Lapo Civiletti, said the company was truly sorry and apologised again to everyone affected.

The aftermath

By the time the outbreak was over, more than 450 people had fallen ill, with the United Kingdom recording the most cases, followed by France. In July 2023 Ferrero found salmonella again in the factory environment at Arlon. This time the Belgian authorities said no product that could have been contaminated had reached consumers. A criminal investigation into the 2022 outbreak by prosecutors in Belgium's Luxembourg province, where Arlon lies, was still going on at that point.

Not the first time

Chocolate is not a food most people associate with food poisoning, which is part of why these cases shock. Britain had its own chocolate salmonella scandal in 2006, when Cadbury was slow to tell the regulator about contamination at one of its factories: see [the Cadbury salmonella scare of 2006](#). In both cases, the lesson was the same: when something goes wrong in a food factory, the public needs to know quickly.

What to do in a recall

Recalls in the UK are published by the Food Standards Agency. If you have a recalled product, do not eat it, and return it to the shop or follow the maker's instructions. See [how to read a sweet label](#).

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