

# MEMORANDUM

To: Acting Medical Officer of Health  
Via: Director, Environmental Health   
From: Environmental Health Officer, George Town District  
Date: March 6, 2017

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**SUBJECT: Report of Investigation of Food Contamination at the George Town Hospital (HAS)**

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This report is a summary of the actions taken by the Department Environmental Health (DEH) following the investigation of a complaint of food contamination at the George Town Hospital (HSA) on March 4, 2017.

On Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017 I, Joel Victorine, Environmental Health Officer (EHO) received complaints about patients at the George Town Hospital who had discovered “maggots” in their porridge that was served as breakfast that morning. Given the seriousness of the complaint, an investigation was immediately undertaken.

The details of the investigation are as follows;

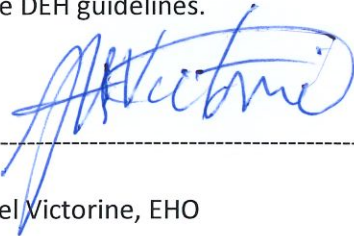
- The management and kitchen staff responsible for the preparation of the breakfast meal were interviewed to ascertain the procedures involved in food preparation and whether all best practices were followed.
- On the morning of the 4-03-2017, it was determined that two (2) boxes of Quaker (Creamy Wheat) cereal were utilized to make porridge for the patients of the Hospital; Forty Eight (48) servings of porridge were prepared as a part of the breakfast meal.
- Two patients from the maternity ward reported that they found what appeared to be “maggots” in their porridge.
- Immediately after the hospital staff was notified, the porridges were recalled from all wards; seventeen (17) meals were returned to the kitchen and the others were discarded on the wards.
- A closer examination of some of the recalled porridge in the kitchen revealed what appeared to be meal “Weevil larvae”.
- There were no evidence of maggots present in any of the porridges inspected or in any other similar products that were examined.
- The expiration date of the batch of Quaker, Creamy Wheat is 20-12-2017.
- A physical inspection of the facility found that the kitchen facility met the DEH’s Food Safety requirements.

- The inspection also revealed that the kitchen and all storage areas were free from insects and vermin.
- The kitchen and storage areas were deemed to be in a satisfactory sanitary condition and as such did not present any risk to the foods being prepared in the facility.
- All temperature control measures were checked and did not present any risk to food safety.
- All food Handlers working in the Hospital received Food Hygiene Training offered by DEH.

The recommendations and conclusion are as follows:

1. Remove all remaining Quaker Creamy Wheat cereal from storage and dispose of same in a satisfactory manner.
2. All other cereals, flour and other similar products in storage in the hospital kitchen store should be checked. Measures should be taken if any other contamination is detected to prevent products entering the food chain.
3. Regularly monitor temperature variation in the dry storage area. Steps should be taken at all times to ensure that grains and cereals or similar products are stored in temperature controlled environment.
4. Regular in-house training of all food handlers food safety best practices.
5. Implement a simple quality assurance system for foods served in the hospital wards.
6. Inform the food supplier to thoroughly check to ascertain the extent of any contamination at their location.
7. An Environmental Health Officer will also schedule visits to both the hospital and supplier premises to monitor compliance.

It should be noted that it is not uncommon for cereals and grains to be harvested with dormant insect eggs; sometimes processing does not get rid of all of dormant eggs. However, detection of weevil is considered a food contaminant but generally pose no health risk to the food or consumers. At times, when certain food products are stored for prolong periods, the dormant eggs can hatch and their larvae can develop and be present in the food. Normally, the public and food suppliers if they detect weevil contaminants the food products would have normally been removed and dispose of in accordance with the DEH guidelines.



Joel Victorine, EHO

- CC - Dr. Paulino Rodrigues, ADEH
- Mr. Mark Robson, EHO