

Is Eating Raw Cookie Dough Safe?



Description

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While cooking flour will kill E. coli, it's important to reduce the risk of exposure to the bacteria and immediately discarding a bag of flour that is part of a recall. Symptoms of food sickness can vary, but swallowing E. coli may cause serious and sometimes delayed symptoms such as: Bloody stools Nausea Significant stomach pain Escalated conditions that lead to kidney failure or death Salmonella and E. coli are most threatening to vulnerable populations, such as those with compromised immune symptoms, the elderly, and young children, all of whom can face more serious symptoms as a result of consuming the bacteria. Handling Raw Cookie Dough Safely To further limit the risk of foodborne illness from raw cookie dough, separate raw elements of the dough, such as unpasteurized eggs and flour that has not been heat-treated to eliminate E. coli, from other ingredients in the dough until it is necessary to mix them. Keep anything that contacts raw cookie dough safe by washing them thoroughly with soap and water, including: Hands Surfaces Bowls Spoons Other objects used to prepare the dough When raw ingredients are not in use, store them properly, and bake cookies thoroughly to ensure eggs and flour are cooked through and safe to consume. If children are helping you bake, wash their little hands thoroughly and ensure that they don't play with or eat the dough during the process! Beyond cookies, this applies to any dough with raw ingredients, including pizza, cookies, and cake mixes, and any other forms of raw cookie dough, such as accompaniments in a milkshake or as an ice cream topping. Risks of Store-Bought Cookie Dough Versus Homemade Cookie Dough Eating Store-Bought Cookie Dough The cookie dough in store-bought cookie dough ice cream contains safe-to-eat cookie dough with flour that has been treated to kill E. coli and pasteurized or no eggs. As a result, cookie dough ice cream is safe to eat. The same holds true for edible cookie dough with similar ingredients, but store-bought cookie dough intended for cooking should not be consumed in dough form unless its packaging expressly indicates that it is safe to eat raw. While store-bought, non-edible cookie dough undergoes processing that might reduce the risk of exposure to salmonella, the processing does not completely eliminate the risk of exposure to the bacteria and should be tasted after the cookies have left the oven. Just like with homemade dough, this risk persists in store-bought biscuit and cake mixes, which are also intended for baking rather than eating raw. Eating Homemade Cookie Dough The process behind creating store-bought cookie dough might mean a lower risk of salmonella, but that same process contains extra sugar and artificial ingredients. Making homemade cookies can allow you to control the ingredients you include, such as eliminating allergens or using healthier alternatives to common recipes. Regardless, unless you plan to make your cookies with pasteurized eggs and treated flour, forego the raw cookie dough and wait for the oven timer to indulge.

Risks of Eating Raw Cookie Dough Cookie dough may rival chocolate chip cookies themselves as a favorite dessert, but is raw cookie dough safe to eat? Before entering the oven, raw cookie dough contains ingredients that need to be treated or pasteurized in order to kill bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. Before you dig in to pre-cooked batter, think about these factors to determine the risk. Risks of Eating Unpasteurized Eggs in Raw Cookie Dough Homemade raw cookie dough generally contains unpasteurized eggs, which contain salmonella bacteria, the pathogen responsible for symptoms that can range from stomach cramps and diarrhea to fever and vomiting. Some recipes, such as Caesar dressing, call for raw eggs, and some versions of eggs, such as poached eggs, do not completely cook the eggs. In these cases, pasteurizing the eggs can make them safe to eat. Pasteurizing goes beyond simply washing the outside of the egg, which may actually increase the risk of exposure to salmonella. Instead, through a combination of vinegar or lemon juice and heating the egg to an internal temperature of 140 degrees F, pasteurization kills bacteria such as salmonella without cooking the egg. Cookie dough that contains pasteurized eggs can be safe to eat so long as its other raw ingredients are also heat-treated appropriately. Risks of Eating Untreated Flour in Raw Cookie Dough Similarly, raw flour can contain the bacteria Escherichia coli, more commonly known as E. coli. Just tasting raw flour may lead to foodborne illness as E. coli may exist in a section of flour, not necessarily an entire bag. Even gluten-free alternatives to wheat flour can contain E. coli: since the bacteria can proliferate throughout the growing and milling process, it can also affect oat, rice, and chickpea flour.