Fact Sheet: Physical Hazards

Illness and injury can result from hard foreign objects in food. These physical hazards can result from contamination and/or poor procedures at many points in the food chain from harvest to consumer, including those within the retail food establishment and foodsevice operations.

Main Materials of Concern as Physical Hazards and Common Sources[a,b]

Material	Injury Potential	Sources
Glass fixtures	Cuts, bleeding; may require surgery to find or remove	Bottles, jars, light, utensils, gauge covers
Wood	Cuts, infection, choking; may require surgery to remove	Fields, pallets, boxes, buildings
Stones, metal fragments	Choking, broken teeth Cuts, infection; may require surgery to remove	Fields, buildings, machinery, fields, wire, employees
Insulation	Choking; long-term if asbestos	Building materials
Bone	Choking, trauma	Fields, improper plant processing
Plastic	Choking, cuts, infection; may require surgery to remove	Fields, plant packaging materials, pallets, employees
Personal effects	Choking, cuts, broken teeth; may require surgery to remove	Employees

[a] Adapted from Corlett (1991).
[b] Used with permission, "HACCP Principles and Applications", Pierson and Corlett, Eds. 1992. Chapman & Hall, New York, NY.

Courtesy of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)