

This month sees the start of a nationwide trial in which kids who suffer from nut allergies will be fed daily doses of peanut flour.

It follows a pilot with 23 sufferers, 21 of whom were subsequently able to eat 12 peanuts a day without coming to any harm. Regularly eating tiny quantities of peanut apparently desensitises the metabolism by building a tolerance to a potentially deadly allergen.

Strike me down with a mouthful of lysteria monocytogenes – the blindingly obvious finally dawns on those who should know better.

For years, foodie types argued that the escalation in childhood allergies is in part caused by the food police's quest for squeaky clean, sanitised, antiseptic, absolutely bloody tasteless food.

Exposure to the odd bug rarely if ever kills and over time it builds immunity.

But watch up, the police are on the prowl again. A recent email from an EHO suggests she's losing sleep over regulations governing display lives for open fresh food.

In case you missed the 2006 legislation, we're now required to monitor the time cheese, meat and other open fresh foods are displayed in the counter. You cannot work to manufacturers' 'use by' dates once the first consumer portion is cut; each product needs a shorter, individual display life, measured in days.

Producers are reluctant to provide these dates because they're unable to monitor individual counter temperatures so the Guild of Fine Food published its own set of guidelines for displaying cut cheeses and meats.

We didn't dream them up, we distilled them from operating procedures used by major supermarkets and presumably approved by their local EHOs. To help members avoid binning edible food, the Guild also followed supermarket guidelines allowing slower moving products to be opened, halved or quartered, re-wrapped and displayed using the original 'use by' dates until the first consumer portion is cut.

This worries our EHO, who writes: "I would be interested to learn who/what body/EHO approved the policy of tightly re-wrapping halves or quarters of slow selling meats and cheeses and applying the original best before date. Once opened meat/cheese is exposed to potential contamination from hands, chopping boards, utensils, air etc. The shelf life is greatly reduced from the one the manufacturers apply."

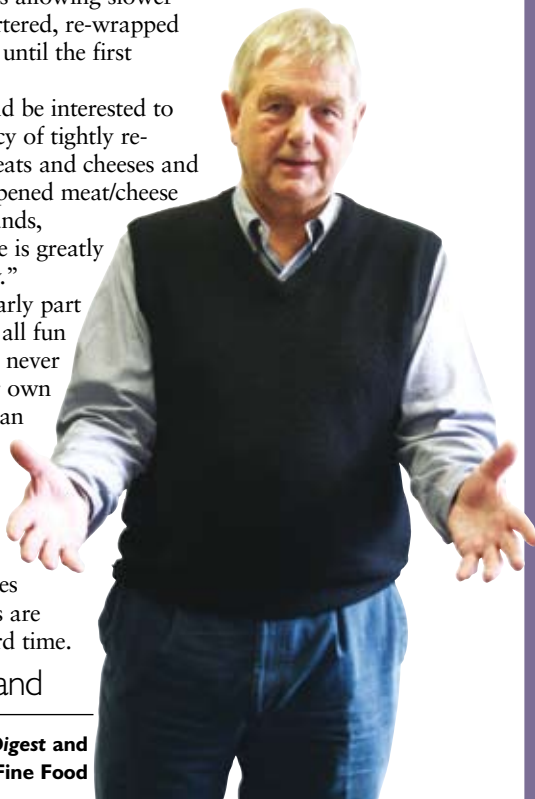
She may well have a point but she's also clearly part of the 'let's remove every conceivable risk and all fun from life' brigade. It's likely her loving parents never let her walk to school or play outdoors on her own and her teachers banned snowball fights and ran sports days where every child was a winner. She might even have a nut allergy.

Eating good food containing tiny amounts of bacteria encourages immunity. It also tastes better, is more satisfying and at my age, is the only enjoyable activity I can manage three times a day. She should go check what supermarkets are doing before giving delis and farm shops a hard time.

Bob Farrand

Bob Farrand is publisher of *Fine Food Digest* and national director of the Guild of Fine Food

“Eating good food containing tiny amounts of bacteria encourages immunity. It also tastes better.”



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What they're saying

“I don't believe FARMA own the words 'farmers' market' yet, do they? I know farmers, I buy from them and I sell their produce on, so to my mind I'm running a farmers' market.”

Susanna Sait, **Deli of the Month** – p17

