



Test before you taste: high-quality microbiological food testing to ensure the safety of your products

We have been working with food manufacturers from all over UK since 1996. Our range of test methods comply with industry standards. Annual accreditation, external quality assurance and regular proficiency testing ensures the best industry standard testing. A team of **experienced clinically trained food microbiology scientists** are working with you and your samples to provide tailored test packages and reports to suit your needs. We offer our clients **FREE consumables** and **FREE courier service** in the eligible parts of the country. We currently test a variety of food samples including ice cream, juices and flavours, meat, mushrooms, milk, biscuits, fresh produce including cress and beansprouts, smoked salmon, crabs, whelks, cheese and swabs.

UKAS inspection

NationWide Laboratories is registered as part of UKAS – United Kingdom Accreditation Service. This means that we follow standard procedures and have a robust quality system in place to ensure you are getting the most accurate results for your products. We regularly undertake External Quality Assurance to ensure our methods identify the correct levels of bacteria and isolating the correct pathogens.

Water testing/sewage

The recent floods in the UK have caused widespread sewage contamination in some coastal areas. This has highlighted the need for testing waters whether drinking or bathing to check their cleanliness and safety. At NationWide Laboratories we offer fully accredited drinking water and pool water tests. We have many years of experience and can tailor the test to suit your needs.

Swab tests for Salmonella

Salmonella is a common bacterial infection which can affect the intestinal tract of humans and animals. It comes from the guts of animals and humans and foods can be contaminated by contact with faeces such as manure in soil. They can also be spread by poor cooking and cross contamination and are often found in raw meat, undercooked poultry and unpasteurised milk. *Salmonella* can also be a problem in other foodstuffs including chocolate, salads and shellfish which is why many of these products are tested for this pathogen.



NationWide Laboratories offers an accredited test to identify different strains of *Salmonella*. We use a variety of selective and chromogenic agar designed to isolate even small numbers of *Salmonella* in a product. We can also offer a swab test for *Salmonella* to ensure thorough cleaning of workstations and equipment is taking place.



Clostridium botulinum (pesto story)



Did you know that Pesto can be an ideal environment for the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*? The combination of garlic and oil provides an ideal breeding ground for these anaerobic bacteria.

Although *C. botulinum* is used around the world to enhance lips and reduce wrinkles it can also have serious side effects if ingested.

A recent sample here at NationWide Laboratories was pesto made with wild garlic – the client had been advised to test to make sure their product wasn't a risk for botulism. Botulism is a rare and possibly fatal illness caused by the ingestion of spores which can produce a toxin when exposed to low oxygen. Foodstuffs such as pesto, home canned goods, honey and modified atmosphere products (MAP) can be a source of this infection.

How can I reduce the risk of botulism in my products?

Controlling factors can be applied to products that limit the growth of botulism. These include imposing a maximum shelf life of 10 days for MAP with storage at temperatures between 3°C and 8°C.

If an extended shelf life of greater than 10 days is required, we can help at NationWide Laboratories by testing for controlling factors including:

- pH of foods – this should be <4.6
- Water activity (Aw) – this should be ≤0.97 Aw
- Salt – this should be ≥3.5%

Allergens



14 allergens are reportable by the UK law. These are:

Celery
Cereals containing gluten
Crustaceans
Eggs
Fish
Lupin
Milk
Molluscs
Mustard
Peanuts
Sesame
Soyabeans
Sulphur dioxide and sulphites
Tree nuts

The new allergen labelling law came into effect recently. This applies to all prepacked and non - prepacked food and drink. This requires all food business operators to clearly label their products with any allergens or potential allergens present. This will help reduce any risk to the public by being clear about ingredients and the food manufacturing processes.

NationWide Laboratories can help ensure that your product is free from allergens by offering the above as tests. We can also ensure that your workspace is being kept allergen free by testing not only food but surface swabs and equipment swabs before and after cleaning.

Contact us for details and for a swab kit.