

# PHS Health Protection Alert

Title	Description
Event	Glycerol in slush ice drinks - July 2025 update
Alert reference number	2025/16
Recipients of this Alert and Action required	<p>NHS Board Health Protection Teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cascade to GPs, health visitors, paediatricians, Emergency Departments, Biochemical Laboratories, Acute Sector Medical Directors for awareness and advised reporting of suspected cases</li> <li>- share with Local Authority Environmental Health Teams</li> <li>- use the context below to record suspected cases on HP Zone</li> </ul> <p>PHS Executive Team, CMO Office (CMO and DCMO), SG Health Protection, PHS OOH1, PHS OOH2, PHS EPRR, PHS FET, PHS Comms, PHS Microbiology, Food Standards Scotland (FSS), NHS24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for information</li> </ul>
Alert status	<p>As above:</p> <p>4. for action - monitoring, wider dissemination and specific measures to be taken by recipient</p>
Date of issue	July 17th 2025
Source of event information	Food Standards Scotland
Contact	<a href="mailto:p&lt;sup&gt;h&lt;/sup&gt;s.eph@p&lt;sup&gt;h&lt;/sup&gt;s.scot">p<sup>h</sup>s.eph@p<sup>h</sup>s.scot</a> (EPH Team Mailbox)
Authorised by	Dr Maria Rossi, Head of Division (Environment and Emergency Response)
HPZone context	Slush Ice Drinks 2025

## Situation

Across the UK, over recent years, several children have become unwell after consuming slush ice drinks containing glycerol either in commercial premises or from drinks consumed at home. Several of the children required hospitalisation (sometimes with a degree of resuscitation) when they presented with a history and symptoms consistent with glycerol intoxication. Details of these cases can be found [here](#).

## Background

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) has updated its **voluntary guidance**, advising that:

- children under 7 years old should not consume slush drinks containing glycerol, glycerine, or food additive number E422.
- free refills should not be offered in venues where children under the age of 10 years are likely to consume them.

Food Standards Agency (FSA) has launched a **new campaign** to increase awareness of the risks, further adding that children aged 7 to 10 should have no more than one 350ml serving per day.

## Assessment

A new **FSA rapid risk assessment** of glycerol effects in children takes a more precautionary approach than the assessment from 2023, which was based on average body weight. The change is based on assessing the impact of one serving of slush ice drink (350ml) on children with a lower-than-average body weight for their age.

In announcing the updated guidance, Food Standards Scotland issued the following:

“The updated risk assessment highlights that younger children, particularly those with lower body weight, are more vulnerable to the effects of glycerol. We’re advising that these drinks should not be consumed by children under seven to minimise the risk of harm.

Parents, carers and businesses all play an important role in helping to ensure that slush ice drinks are consumed safely.”

The updated advice also applies to ready-to-drink slush ice drinks with glycerol in pouches and home kits containing glycerol slush concentrates.

## Recommendations

NHS Board Health Protection Teams are requested to share this alert with clinicians in paediatric departments, General Practice, health visitors, Emergency Departments, Biochemical Laboratories and Medical Directors to increase awareness. They are also requested to share with Local Authority colleagues for awareness-raising and to encourage information sharing.

Local clinicians are advised to notify their local HPT of any suspected cases. HPTs are then requested to alert Local Authority colleagues for onward notification to FSS.

Local Authority Environmental Health teams are requested to alert both local HPTs and FSS to any suspected cases of which they become aware.

## Context

NHS Board HPT colleagues, please use the context **Slush Ice Drinks 2025** to record suspected cases on HP Zone.