

Caution when eating bitter-tasting courgettes (zucchini)

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There are currently reports in the press of a fatal poisoning caused by eating bitter-tasting courgettes.

The adverse health effects are to be seen in connection with an increased occurrence of bitter substances in the vegetable. The cause of the bitter taste are the naturally occurring bitter toxins in the plant which may - depending on the variety concerned and the growing conditions - be found in higher concentrations. The BfR recommends that an unusually bitter taste be taken as a warning sign to suggest that the particular variety of courgette is not intended or suitable for human consumption. Before cooking, the raw vegetable should be checked by tasting and not used if it tastes bitter.

The full version of this BfR Communication is available in German on <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/vorsicht-beim-verzehr-von-bitteren-zucchini.pdf>