

# Safe Handling of Raw Oysters in Grocery Stores

*Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (*Vibrio*) are bacteria naturally found in the ocean. These bacteria are present at higher concentrations as water temperatures get warmer. *Vibrio* accumulates in shellfish like oysters, mussels and scallops particularly in the summer. Eating raw or undercooked shellfish, like raw oysters contaminated with *Vibrio*, may cause foodborne illness (nausea, vomiting and diarrhea).

**Cooking oysters to an internal temperature of 74°C is the safest way to serve them.**

## Basic Food Safety Procedures for Selling Raw Oysters

1. Obtain oysters from approved suppliers only. Shellfish tags must arrive with each lot. Keep tags for your records for a minimum of 3 months.
2. Check the temperature of the oysters when they arrive. Reject oysters above 4 °C, as warmer temperatures may allow *Vibrio* to grow.
3. Keep a record of all shellfish deliveries. Include date, temperature, supplier, type, tag info, and lot number.
4. Refrigerate immediately. Store and display the oysters at 4 °C or lower at all times up to sale.
5. Only sell fresh live oysters. Live oysters will be tightly closed or will close when the shell is tapped.
6. Always wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling raw oysters. Avoid cross contamination by washing and sanitizing all cutting boards, utensils and counter tops.

**To reduce the risk of illness, consumers should be made aware of the increased risk associated with eating raw or undercooked oysters.**

**For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.**

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