

Loss

Control



FARMERS

Information Bulletin

Risks Associated with Raw Shellfish Consumption

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration has advised that a common saltwater microorganism, *Vibrio vulnificus*, carried at times by oysters, especially in the summer months from Gulf Coast waters, can be the cause of severe illness and death for individuals with certain medical conditions. These medical conditions include:

- Liver diseases including cirrhosis and hemochromatosis
- Chronic alcohol use
- Cancer (especially if taking anti-cancer drugs or radiation)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Chronic kidney disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease, or persons using immunosuppressive drugs
- Steroid dependency (as used for conditions such as COPD)
- Achlorhydria (a condition in which the normal acidity of the stomach is reduced or absent)

Vibrio vulnificus is a naturally occurring bacteria. It is prevalent April through October. Most people's immune systems are able to ward off infections, however, people in the "high risk" category can develop severe or fatal infections if they eat raw molluscan shellfish or exposed open wounds to warm seawater.

Common practices, derived from the requirements of the Texas Department of Health, include the following controls and safeguards.

PURCHASING PRACTICES

- Purchase and use only raw oysters, clams, mussels, or whole or roe-on scallops as shell stock (in the shell) or shucked shellfish that originates from certified interstate shellfish shippers. Do not purchase

molluscan shellfish from recreational or commercially licensed shell stock harvesters.

- Certified shellfish shippers will have a written Hazard Analysis Critical Control Program (HACCP).
- Sources for raw shellfish should be listed in the Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers List that is published by the U.S. FDA. A list of certified dealers can be found at www.texasoysters.com. They must be properly labeled and tagged and have an internal meat temperature of less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit for shell stock, and 45 degrees Fahrenheit for shucked shellfish.
- Verify that a shipper is in good standing at least monthly.
- Check shell stock tags and shellfish labels upon receipt. Staff should be trained regarding what to look for on the tag or labels. Details are noted on the rear of this bulletin.

STORAGE PRACTICES

- Separate shellfish and shell stock from all other raw and cooked food.
- Do not mix different lots or species.
- Reduce meat temperature to 45 degrees F for shell stock and 40 degrees F for shucked product within 2 hours of receipt. Store shucked oysters at 32-38 degrees F. In-shell oysters should be stored at 38 degrees F.
- Have good air circulation around shell stock.
- Keep product off the floor and up on pallets or shelves.
- Properly refrigerated, shucked oysters will keep up to 14 days from the shucking date. In-shell oysters will keep up to 14 days from harvest.
- Maintain lot source identification tags, labels, or record keeping. File and retain the tag for 90 days after the container is emptied.

SALES AND SERVING

- Sell only live shell stock.
- Keep records that indicate which shellfish are sold or served on which days.
- Test oysters by tapping open shells with a hard object and discard shell stock that does not close its shell.
- Use a molluscan shell only once as a serving container for the oyster which comes in that shell.
- Print the proper advisory on your menu if you serve raw oysters. See next column.

SHELLSTOCK CONTAINER TAGS

Train staff to know what to look for on the tag. Post an example of a properly filled out tag and label in the receiving area. The tags should have the following information:

- Name, address and certification number of the certified shipper
- Original shippers certification number if different from above
- Date of harvesting
- Most precise identification possible of the harvest location including the two letter state abbreviation
- When molluscan shell stock has been in wet storage in a dealer's operation the tag shall state: **THIS PRODUCT IS A PRODUCT OF (Name of State) AND WAS WET STORED AT (Facility Certification Number) FROM (Date) TO (Date)**
- The quantity and type of shellfish (i.e. 1 sack oysters) and the following statement in bold capitalized type on each tag must state **“THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS”**

SHUCKED SHELLFISH LABELS

Must have the following information:

- Name, address, certification number of the packer or repacker
- “Sell By” or “Best If Used By” on containers of unfrozen product less than ½ gallon
- On containers larger than ½ gallon must have “Sell By” or Best Used By” and “Date Shucked” followed by the date the product was shucked and also the date on the lid
- On frozen product, the words “Best If Used By” followed by the date. Frozen shellfish must also be labeled with the words “Frozen”, “Individually Quick Frozen”, or “IQF” impressed, embossed, lithographed or otherwise permanently recorded on the container.

Stamping is not allowed, except for the date itself.

(Tagging and labeling requirements above per Texas Food Establishment Rules, TFER, Section 229)

REQUIRED CONSUMER ADVISORY

If you serve raw oysters at your food establishment in Texas, regulation requires you print the following advisory in your menu:

There is a risk associated with consuming raw oysters or any raw animal protein. If you have chronic illness of the liver, stomach, or blood, or have immune disorders, you are at greatest risk of illness from raw oysters and should eat oysters fully cooked. If unsure of your risk, consult your physician.

INFORMATION SOURCES

www.restaurantville.com www.texasoysters.com
www.tdh.state.tx.us www.agr.state.tx.us
www.cfsan.fda.gov www.nal.usda.gov

SAMPLE TAG

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BUDDY ROBIN SEAFOOD, INC.
OAK ISLAND, TEXAS
PH. (409) 252-4272
Cert. No. TX-289-SP

Original Shipper: (If other than TX-289-SP): _____

Harvest Date: _____

“THE PRODUCT SHOULD NOT BE CONSUMED RAW AFTER 14 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF HARVEST, BUT SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY COOKED”.

Harvest Location: _____

CERTIFIED _____ **OYSTERS**

Quantity: _____ **ONE SACK**

Harvester: _____

THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS.

CONSUMER INFORMATION

There is risk associated with consuming raw oysters or any raw animal protein. If you have chronic illness of the liver, stomach or blood, or have immune disorders, you are at greater risk of serious illness from raw oysters and should eat oysters fully cooked. If unsure of your risk, consult a physician.