

Educate, Don't Frighten Consumers

SEAFOOD IS SAFE TO EAT

(Printer-friendly copy)

Seafood is an important part of a healthy diet because it is a good source of high-quality protein, is generally low in calories and fat, and has Omega-3 fatty acids that have many positive health benefits. The American Heart Association and [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010](#) recommend eating at least two servings of seafood each week.

However, some consumers hear negative information about one type or species of seafood like oysters and avoid seafood all together. In addition, food safety messages for certain "at-risk" groups are frequently misunderstood or followed by consumers who are not at risk.

Therefore, remind consumers that eating any raw animal food is risky, but cooking and effective post-cooking handling reduces the risk of foodborne illness.



Prevention

How to reduce the risk of bacterial infection by *Vibrio vulnificus* is important for everyone. However, some helpful ideas for educating at-risk consumers are:

- **Consumers with weakened immunity** (diabetics, dialysis patients and local support groups for liver, cancer and AIDS) are advised to eat only thoroughly cooked seafood and avoid consuming raw seafood, especially oysters.
- **Stress that thorough cooking kills harmful bacteria** and viruses in seafood, meat and poultry. Demonstrate the proper cooking of shellfish and/or provide cooked oyster recipes.
- **Obtain free consumer brochures** from the [Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference](#) or ask your physician or other health care professionals to provide you with free [ISSC](#) *Vibrio vulnificus* Fact Sheets.

Remember, thorough cooking of oysters will destroy the potentially harmful *Vibrio* bacteria!

Source: This information was provided by [SafeOysters.org](#)

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