



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

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Notice to Restaurants and Retail Establishments Selling or Serving British Columbia Oysters in Ontario

March 21, 2017

On February 2, Ontario's Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a [public advisory*](#) informing Ontarians of gastrointestinal illness linked to the consumption of oysters.

Public health officials in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia continue to receive reports of diarrhea and vomiting, including confirmed norovirus illness, associated with the consumption of raw and lightly cooked oysters sourced from harvesting areas in British Columbia. The investigation of these illnesses is ongoing and is being conducted in collaboration with other agencies. British Columbia oyster harvesting areas linked to gastrointestinal illnesses are being assessed by regulatory agencies and in some situations tested and closed. However, gastrointestinal illnesses linked to consuming raw or lightly cooked oysters continue to be reported, indicating contaminated oysters remain on the market.

- As a result, it is advised that oysters from British Columbia be cooked to an internal temperature of 90°C (194°F) for a minimum of 90 seconds to eliminate norovirus.
- Food service operators should inform customers of the varieties and origin of raw or lightly cooked oysters that are being sold or served to them.

Updated information about the ongoing national outbreak and investigation can be found on the Public Health Agency of Canada website at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2017/outbreak-norovirus-eclosion-eng.php>.

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