



Be Sure.

Cooked oysters retain most of their nutritious elements such as zinc, calcium, iron and Vitamins A, B, C and D. They can be enjoyed in a variety of delicious ways such as charbroiled, grilled, broiled, fried, poached, sautéed and stewed. You can also eat them in such famous dishes as Oysters Rockefeller, Oysters Bienville and Oysters en Brochette.

To make sure your oysters are fully cooked, use these tips as guidance:

IN THE SHELL

- Cook oysters in small pots so those in the middle are cooked thoroughly.
- If you are boiling the oysters, cook for an additional 3-5 minutes after the shells have opened.
- If you are steaming the oysters, make sure the pot is already steaming before you put in the oysters. Then steam the live oysters for 4-9 minutes.

SHUCKED OYSTERS

- Boil or simmer for at least 3 minutes or until the edges curl.
- Fry at 375° F for at least 3 minutes.
- Broil oysters 3 inches from heat for at least 3 minutes.
- Bake at 450° F for 10 minutes.

Be More Informed.

Get all the facts on raw oysters, the *Vibrio vulnificus* bacteria, cooking tips and delicious recipes at

BeOysterAware.com

When it comes to eating raw or undercooked oysters...

Be Informed.

Be Cautious.

Be Smart.

Be Sure.

BeOysterAware.com



Photography courtesy of the Acme Oyster House, New Orleans, LA

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Be Informed.

Each year, millions of Americans enjoy eating raw oysters without serious risk to their health. There are some people, however, who have certain medical conditions that put them at-risk if the raw oyster contains *Vibrio vulnificus* bacteria. This naturally occurring bacteria is found in warm coastal waters, and is **NOT** a result of pollution. It can be found in waters approved for shellfish harvesting, and the bacteria does not change the appearance, taste, color or odor of the oysters. Yet it can cause severe illness, even death, if consumed by persons with certain medical conditions. For persons with these conditions, you can avoid illness by simply eating oysters that have been thoroughly cooked.

For those at-risk consumers that still choose to consume raw oysters, they should only eat oysters that are labeled as having undergone a process that reduces *Vibrio vulnificus* to non-detectable levels. These products reduce but do not eliminate the risk of illness for these consumers.

Healthy people are not at risk of serious infection.

Be Cautious.

See your physician and find out if you have any of the following medical conditions that put you at-risk when eating raw or undercooked oysters, or any raw seafood.

- Liver disease from hepatitis, cirrhosis, alcoholism or cancer
- Iron overload diseases (hemochromatosis)
- Diabetes
- Cancer, including lymphoma, leukemia and Hodgkin's disease
- Stomach disorders
- Any illness or medical treatment that weakens the immune system

If you have even one of these conditions, make sure that your oysters are always **fully cooked**.

The heat from thorough cooking destroys the *Vibrio vulnificus* bacteria.

Alternatively, if an at-risk individual insists on consuming raw oysters, they should only eat oysters that have undergone a process to reduce *Vibrio vulnificus* to non-detectable levels. Again, these processes reduce but do not eliminate the risk of illness.



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Be Smart.

Learn the facts. If you are at-risk, eating raw or undercooked oysters can make you very ill and frequently lead to death within two days. These are the most common **symptoms** from contracting *Vibrio vulnificus* infection:

- Stomach pain and nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptoms of a more serious bloodstream infection include:

- Fever and chills
- Skin lesions
- Septic Shock (a significant drop in blood pressure)

If you or anyone of your acquaintances exhibits these symptoms, **seek medical attention immediately** and inform the physician that you or your acquaintance have eaten raw or undercooked oysters. For those at-risk individuals with underlying medical conditions, infection can lead to death within two days. Early, aggressive antibiotic treatment is the most effective therapy.

NOTE: People who are at-risk can also contract *Vibrio vulnificus* infection by swimming or wading in warm seawater with an open wound or sores. **Never** swim in warm seawater if you are at-risk and have an open wound or sores.