



Date, 2016

Dear Owner/Operator:

**Re: Raw Oyster Advisory**

The consumption of raw or undercooked oysters can cause foodborne illness and outbreaks. In the summer of 2015, BC experienced the largest recorded outbreak of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* infection associated with the consumption of raw oysters, mainly in restaurants. Bacteria and viruses present in ocean water can accumulate in oysters and cause illness when consumed without adequate cooking, especially in vulnerable people. *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, Norovirus and Hepatitis A are of specific concern.

As a result, Interior Health is initiating an advisory at the consumer level. The intent of the advisory is to notify consumers of the increased risk of foodborne illness so that consumers can make an informed choice. In order to achieve this, we are requiring food service establishments and temporary food permit holders serving raw oysters to publicly display the following message:

**Interior Health advises:**

***“The consumption of RAW oysters poses an increased risk of foodborne illness.  
A cooking step is needed to eliminate potential bacterial or viral contamination.”***

***Medical Health Officer***

There are several ways in which this information can be provided:

- Include the advisory wording in the menu on the same page as the raw oyster item is listed.
- Provide the advisory on the tables using tent cards. These can be supplied by your local Environmental Health Officer.

We are preparing for the summer season and request your full cooperation with this initiative by May 1 2016.

If you have any questions with regards to this information, please do not hesitate to speak to your local Environmental Health Officer or contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Name

Environmental Health Officer

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