

RESTRICTIONS ON RAW GULF OYSTERS

New limitations on the Sale of
Raw Gulf Oysters In California
Effective April 2003



Each year, Californians become seriously ill and die after consuming raw oysters harvested from the states bordering the Gulf of Mexico (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas), contaminated with the pathogen *Vibrio vulnificus* (*V. vulnificus*). *V. vulnificus* bacteria are naturally present in marine environments. However, the bacteria are at some of their highest levels in Gulf Coast waters and oysters, especially during the warm summer months.

The Department of Public Health (CDPH), previously known as the Department of Health Services (DHS), amended CCR, Title 17, Section 13675, to prevent *V. vulnificus* illnesses and deaths associated with the consumption of raw Gulf oysters. **The most significant revision restricts the sale of raw oysters harvested from the Gulf of Mexico during April 1 through October 31, unless the oysters are treated with a scientifically validated process to reduce *V. vulnificus* to non-detectable levels.**

CDPH is working with retailers and local health departments to implement the requirements of Title 17, Section 13675. If you have any questions regarding this notice contact the Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch (FDB).

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