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## News Release

January 13, 2017

Provincial Health Services Authority  
BC Centre for Disease Control  
Ministry of Health

### **BCCDC advises consumers to properly cook oysters following outbreak**

**Vancouver** – The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) is warning the public following a spike in acute gastrointestinal illness associated with the consumption of oysters.

Since early December 2016, over 70 cases of oyster-related illness have been reported to BC health authorities. Illnesses have been reported to Island Health, Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health and First Nations Health Authority. The outbreak is ongoing and more cases are expected.

People who have been ill have reported eating raw oysters or lightly-cooked oysters in restaurants or prepared at home.

“Testing in several of the cases confirmed the presence of norovirus, and we suspect norovirus in the others,” said Dr. Eleni Galanis, epidemiologist at the BCCDC. “In order to kill norovirus and other bugs, people need to cook oysters thoroughly, to an internal temperature of 90 degrees Celsius for 90 seconds.”

Dr. Galanis says oysters can make people sick at any time during the year. While raw oyster consumption during the summer months is linked to an increased risk of illness from “*Vibrio*” (*Vibrio parahaemolyticus*), other microorganisms like norovirus can be present all year.

The investigation is ongoing.

Anyone becoming ill with diarrhea and vomiting after eating shellfish should call BC HealthLink at 811. If symptoms are severe or persist, they should see their physician.

#### **Learn more about Norovirus:**

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/norovirus-norwalk-like-virus>

#### **Learn more about the safe consumption of fish and shellfish:**

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/food-your-health/fish-shellfish>

The **BC Centre for Disease Control**, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides provincial and national leadership in public health through surveillance, detection,

treatment, prevention and consultation services. The Centre provides both direct diagnostic and treatment services for people with diseases of public health importance and analytical and policy support to all levels of government and health authorities. For more information, please visit [www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@CDCofBC](https://twitter.com/CDCofBC).

The **Provincial Health Services Authority** (PHSA) plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information, visit [www.phsa.ca](http://www.phsa.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@PHSAofBC](https://twitter.com/PHSAofBC).

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