

FDA: Don't eat oysters from Northwest

August 1 2006

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued an advisory against eating raw oysters from the Pacific Northwest.

The agency said there have been an unusual number of reports of infections from *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* in recent weeks. The bacterium causes mild gastrointestinal illness in most people but can cause septicemia and other serious complications in the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

Washington state officials have closed some areas where oysters are known to have caused infections and have launched a recall of oysters harvested from those beds.

Consumers are advised to cook any oysters from the Pacific Northwest or oysters of unknown origin and to do the cooking in small pots or other containers to avoid uneven heat distribution.

People with weakened immune systems, including those with AIDS, cancer, diabetes and stomach disorders and alcoholics, should not consume raw oysters, the FDA said.

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