



## Highlights: Important Health Information



This fact sheet is about seafood (fish and shellfish). It has tips on how to buy, store, and cook seafood. You can use the tips to stop seafood illness.

### Good things about seafood

Seafood is high in protein. It is a good way to get vitamins and minerals. It is low in fat and high in omega-3 fatty acids. These fatty acids are good for heart health.



### Risks of Raw and Undercooked Seafood

People may get sick when they eat raw or undercooked seafood. Some people are more at risk of getting sick. These people may have:

- Diabetes
- Hepatitis
- Immune illness (AIDS, HIV, Cancer, MS, etc.)
- Liver disease
- Stomach problems

### Seafood Illness Signs:

chills, loose stools, fever, skin changes, and being tired.

Shellfish (oysters, mussels, clams, and scallops) can have bacteria called Vibrios.

They are strong and can live in seafood even in the freezer. Algae, Norwalk viruses, and tiny bugs (parasites) can also infect seafood.

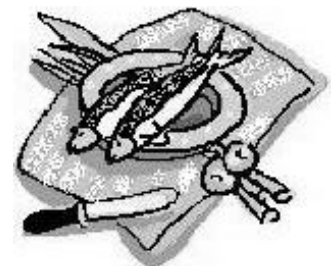
They die if seafood is cooked until well done.

Seafood illness can cause loose stools and vomiting. A health care provider can tell if you have seafood illness.

### Seafood Safety Tips

#### Shopping

Buy seafood only from well-known stores. Fresh fish eyes should **not** be cloudy or sunken. Shellfish should **not** be open. Seafood should **not**:



- smell "fishy"
- be dry
- have "slimy" scales
- have freezer burn
- have damaged packaging



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## Storage

- ◆ Keep fresh fish in the package it was in when bought. Refrigerate or freeze the fish. Store opened seafood such as canned fish in glass or plastic containers.
- ◆ Cover shellfish loosely with a clean, damp cloth. Do **not** store it in water or airtight containers. Put it in the coldest part of the refrigerator.
- ◆ Keep cooked and raw seafood separate.

**Eating shellfish with Norwalk viruses causes very loose stools. Cooking shellfish until it is well done kills the virus.**

## Cooking

Cook fresh seafood no more than two days after you get it. Thaw frozen seafood in the refrigerator for about one day before cooking it.

**Fin fish:** Bake, broil, poach, or stew the fish 10 minutes for each inch of thickness. Turn the fish over halfway through the cooking time. Add 5 minutes of cooking time if the fish is in foil or in a sauce. Cooked fish flakes easily with a fork.

**Shellfish:** Do not put too many shells in one pot. Boil them for 3 to 5 minutes after they open. Instead of boiling, you can steam them for 4 to 9 minutes. Throw away the shells that are not open after cooking.

**Oysters:** Boil or simmer oysters for at least 3 minutes. Bake them if you do not want to boil or simmer them. Bake them for at least 10 minutes at 450 degrees.

Keep food areas clean. Wash hands before and after touching food.

## Seafood Safety Tips Review



- ◆ Buy seafood only from well known stores.
- ◆ Keep cold seafood at below 40 degrees in the package it came in. Keep hot seafood hot at more than 140 degrees.
- ◆ Cook fresh seafood no later than two days after getting it. Cook seafood until it is well done. Keep cooked and raw seafood separate.

The *Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition* has more food safety tips. Telephone them at 888/723-3366.