



Date: December 16, 2022

Health Advisory:

Outbreak of Norovirus Linked to Raw Oysters

On December 7, 2022, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) was notified of ten cases of gastrointestinal illness in Texas and an increase of similar illness from other states among people who consumed raw oysters harvested in Texas. As of 12/15/22, the number of cases in Texas associated with this outbreak was fifty-five. During the investigation, it was determined that the oysters were harvested in the southeastern Galveston Bay area. Several clinical specimen results in persons who ate affected oysters were positive for norovirus. On December 8, 2022, DSHS issued a recall to immediately remove from commerce all oysters harvested from Galveston Bay, designated TX 1 area, during the period of November 17, through December 7, 2022.

Winter is the time of year when there is a possibility of an increase in norovirus illness associated with oyster consumption. Norovirus persists longer in colder marine water. In the U.S., more shellfish-related norovirus outbreaks are seen between November and March.

Symptoms of norovirus typically start 12 to 48 hours after exposure and can last for one to three days. Symptoms of infection may include vomiting and/or diarrhea, nausea, muscle aches, fever, and headache.

Consuming raw or undercooked oysters from the harvested area may increase the risk of foodborne illness. People who are immune compromised, such as those being treated for cancer, pregnant women, and individuals with chronic health conditions, are at increased risk of severe illness.

While a single case of norovirus is not required to be reported in Texas, providers should report suspected outbreaks of norovirus to their respective local health department or the Department of State Health Services (Phone: 512-776-7676, Fax: 512-776-7616). DSHS suggests that health care practitioners test patients for norovirus if their symptoms are compatible with norovirus infection, and they are suspected to be part of this outbreak.

Additional information:

[DSHS Recalls Oysters Harvested in Area of Southeastern Galveston Bay](#)