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F ast acts on **Recall of Raw Oysters** March 22, 2009

At a Glance: Raw Oysters from certain parts of Mississippi have been linked to 11 Norovirus illnesses. The FDA released an advisory notice on oysters harvested between Feb. 24 and March 17, 2009, from Mississippi Area 2C, located in the Mississippi Sound portion of the Gulf of Mexico.

THE ISSUE: Eleven individuals reported becoming sick after eating raw oysters at a restaurant in Chattanooga, Tenn. Test results by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department and Tennessee Department of Health confirmed that the patients were infected with Norovirus. The oysters were harvested between Feb. 24 and March 17, 2009, from Mississippi Area 2C, located in the Mississippi Sound portion of the Gulf of Mexico near Pass Christian, Miss. As a result, The FDA is working with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources to investigate potential sources of pollution that may have caused the area to become contaminated. In the mean time the agency is advising retailers and food service operators not to offer for sale oysters harvested from this area and consumers to not eat such oysters, especially if they will be eaten raw. The FDA is testing oysters harvested from the area and will continue to provide updates as this investigation unfolds.

Am I Impacted? U.S. Foodservice Distribution Centers are checking the source of all raw oysters and contacting those establishments affected (if any). If any customers are affected, the Distribution Center will contact you with specific information, including when you bought the oysters, how to identify them and disposition instructions. If you purchased raw oysters from any other source outside US Foodservice, we recommend you contact them to find out if you are affected.

US Foodservice Position: At US Foodservice we take food safety very seriously. We also understand the extreme sensitivity of our customers to food-related health issues and are committed to keeping our customers abreast of the latest developments as fast as we get the information.

Follow these basic food safety tips for buying, preparing, and storing oysters:

- Only purchase oysters from distributors who buy from licensed and inspected harvesters.
- Maintain oysters on ice or in the refrigerator or freezer at all times.
- Discard Cracked/Broken Ones: Throw away clams, oysters, and mussels if their shells are cracked or broken.
- Do a "Tap Test": Live clams, oysters, and mussels will close up when the shell is tapped. If they don't close when tapped, do not select them.
- Eating raw oysters with hot sauce or while drinking alcohol does not kill the bacteria, either. Only heat can destroy the bacteria.
- The FDA recommends that shucked oysters be boiled or simmer for at least 3 minutes or until the edges curl; Fry at 375 degrees for at least 3 minutes; Broil 3 inches from heat for 3 minutes or Bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes before service.
- People with weakened immune systems, including those affected by AIDS, chronic alcohol abuse, liver, stomach or blood disorders, cancer, diabetes, or kidney disease should avoid raw oyster consumption altogether, regardless of where the oysters are harvested.

For additional information on this recall, visit the FDA website here <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2009/NEW01978.html>.

This "fast facts" will be updated as news becomes available. Please contact Greg Pallaske, Director of Regulatory Compliance (847.232.5884) for additional information.