

SHELLFISH HARVESTERS' TIPS FOR SAFETY AND QUALITY

Rhode Island shellfish are quality products. Your cooperation with required and recommended practices helps protect the product and the industry.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Disease-causing bacteria and viruses can be found in raw shellfish. Contamination can occur at any point in the food distribution system, including the point of harvest.



Since shellfish filter water for food, any bacteria or viruses in the water will be concentrated in the animal and can make it unsafe to eat. Remember, shellfish is considered ready-to-eat: Consumers may not cook it first --- a step that would kill bacteria.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Shellfish harvested from polluted waters and areas of sewage discharge have higher levels of disease-causing organisms. As harvesters, you already know which areas are closed to shellfishing. These waters are tested for certain bacteria and are only closed to protect human health.

WHAT MUST I DO?

Follow the regulations:

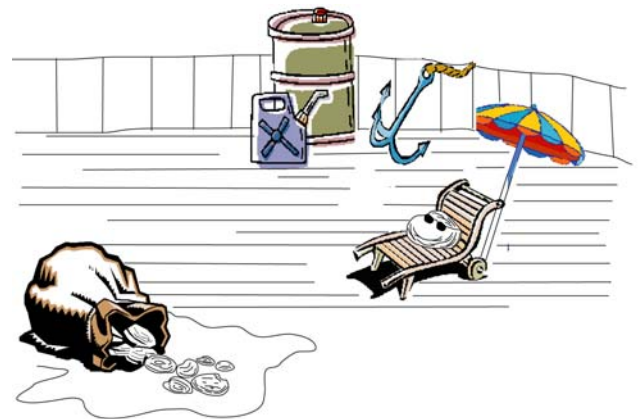
- Don't harvest from polluted waters. All harvesting is prohibited in closed areas.
- Don't discharge sewage into the water. Discharge from ANY vessel, commercial or recreational, into Rhode Island waters is prohibited.

These steps are necessary to protect public health, water quality, and the marine environment.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO PROTECT THE PRODUCT AND IMPROVE QUALITY?

Practice good handling techniques:

- Store out of the sun, covered if possible
- Bring to the dealer as soon as possible for refrigeration.
- Protect shellfish from contamination. Store away from bilge water, fuel oil, and other chemicals.



Produced by Rhode Island Sea Grant and URI Cooperative Extension/Food Science and Nutrition for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

