

Oysters



Food safety

...In the field

Oysters are filter feeders, accumulate what is found in water and so oyster farmers;

- * hold a NSW Food Authority licence to operate according to the Food Regulation 2004
- * harvest in accordance with the NSW Shellfish Program (NSW SP) which adopts Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program standards and aligns with international best practice.

The NSW SP involves

- risk assessment of the shoreline,
- controlling shellfish harvest in accordance with the assessed risk, and
- protecting shellfish from contamination after harvest.

Thousands of water quality data are taken each year at sites determined by identified potential pollution sources. Tests are taken for faecal coliforms and E. Coli, phytoplankton and biotoxins, and chemicals and pesticides.

Each shellfish harvest area is classified as either

- * Conditionally Approved – shellfish can be directly harvested
- * Conditionally Restricted – shellfish must be depurated for a minimum of 36 hours before being sold for human consumption and may be temporarily closed for a number of reasons. For the latest closure status go to <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/fb-shellfish.htm>

...At home

Correct storage and handling of oysters will reduce the bacteria that can multiply in food and cause illness.

Opened oysters

should be eaten within 24 hours of purchase and be stored in the fridge between 0C and 5C.

Unopened oysters

are live animals but should be stored at less than 15C for Sydney Rock Oysters and 10C for Pacific Oysters if depurated or directly harvested more than 72 hours before purchase (most cases).

should be refrigerated at <5°C within 30 minutes after opening and should be covered to protect them from contamination.

