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Ontarios top doc issues health warning over contaminated oysters

By Graeme Frisque

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Halton Region tweeted a health warning from the province's acting chief medical officer of health last week regarding an outbreak of possible norovirus, which may be associated with oysters from British Columbia.

The region s tweet directed residents to a statement released Thursday, Feb. 2, in which acting chief medical officer of health Dr. David McKeown announced a possible connection to a number of cases of gastrointestinal illness reported in the province so far this year.

Since January 2017, 24 cases of gastrointestinal illness consistent with norovirus have been reported in Ontario from individuals who reported eating raw or undercooked oysters, said McKeown in the release.

A popular delicacy, raw oysters on the

half shell are sold widely across the province. According to the release, shellfish such as oysters can become contaminated from the water before they are harvested and officials are suggesting consumers properly cook oysters before eating them.

Cooking oysters at an internal temperature of 90 degrees Celsius (194 degrees Fahrenheit) for a minimum of 90 seconds should eliminate norovirus and other potentially harmful microorganisms, added McKeown.

Anyone experiencing of symptoms of gastrointestinal illness after consuming oysters is being advised to seek medical attention from their health care provider.

Common symptoms of gastrointestinal illness listed include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps.

In most healthy people, acute diarrhea and vomiting should resolve in one to two days. Symptoms may last longer in some people.





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