



## Molluscan Shellfish—The Basics

### What is molluscan shellfish?

An aquatic animal that lives in a shell. They are bivalve filter feeders that can contain pathogens in the surrounding water.

### By which names are molluscan shellfish known?

Oyster, Clam, Mussel, or Scallop.

### What is shellstock?

Live, in-shell molluscan shellfish. For more information, see the bivalve shellfish identification resource: [www.doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/shellfish/recreational-shellfish/illness-prevention/identification](http://www.doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/shellfish/recreational-shellfish/illness-prevention/identification)

### How might they be found in a restaurant, grocery store, truck, or roadside stand?

Fresh or frozen, removed from both their shells (shucked), one shell removed (shucked/half-shell), or contained in both shells (shellstock).

### What is not molluscan shellfish?

Finfish (salmon, tilapia, tuna), crustaceans (lobster, crab, shrimp), snails, conch, octopus, sea urchin.

### Why so much emphasis on molluscan shellfish?

Oysters, clams, and mussels grow in water that may contain pathogenic bacteria and viruses, such as *Vibrio* species, hepatitis A virus, or norovirus. Many molluscan shellfish are consumed without a cooking step to kill those pathogens. In addition, some molluscan shellfish may contain toxins from algae in the growing water.

For more information, see *The Bad Bug Book* available for download:

[www.fda.gov/food/foodborne-pathogens/bad-bug-book-second-edition](http://www.fda.gov/food/foodborne-pathogens/bad-bug-book-second-edition).

### Other quick facts:

- Molluscan shellfish are time/temperature control for safety foods
- Date marking DOES NOT apply to shellstock
- Molluscan shellfish are often consumed raw, especially oysters
- Tag requirements do not apply to commercially packaged frozen or shucked shellfish, such as shucked scallops
- Molluscan shellfish are not included in the major food allergens because they are not crustacean