

ENVIRONMENTAL & FOOD VIROLOGY

ESR researches and provides scientific and technical advice on virus contamination in water, food and shellfish.

Our environmental and food virology team has developed and validated methods to identify norovirus and other enteric viruses in water, food and shellfish, and has acquired an in-depth knowledge of the problems of enteric virus-contaminated shellfish in the environment.

Water and food-borne disease outbreaks are often associated with human enteric viruses; for example, sewage pollution causes shellfish grown in contaminated waters to be contaminated too.

Humans can be infected with viruses by:

- ▶ eating contaminated shellfish
- ▶ drinking or swimming in polluted water
- ▶ eating food that has been irrigated, washed or prepared using contaminated water
- ▶ eating food that has been contaminated by food handlers
- ▶ person-to-person transmission.

We test environmental and food samples implicated in outbreaks for disease surveillance purposes. This helps public health agencies to identify the causes and trace the sources of gastrointestinal outbreaks linked to shellfish, water and food. Clinical specimens from outbreaks are tested by the Norovirus Reference Laboratory.



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