



# Parasite Destruction

Restaurants serving raw or undercooked fish (cooked to less than 145°F) are required to provide proof that the fish has been frozen for parasite destruction.

## What is parasite destruction?

It is the process of freezing fish to kill dangerous parasites found in their meat. If eaten, these parasites can cause foodborne illness. To destroy the parasites, the fish must be:

1. Frozen and stored at **-4°F** or below for at least **7 days** (168 hours), or
2. Frozen at **-31°F** or below until solid and stored at **-31°F** or below for at least **15 hours**, or
3. Frozen at **-31°F** or below until solid and stored at **-4°F** or below for at least **24 hours**

When you buy fish for your facility, the supplier must give you a parasite destruction letter with this information:

- **Name and address of facility**
- **Name and address of supplier**
- **Name of fish type frozen for parasite destruction**
- **Temperature and length of time in which the fish were frozen** (see 1<sup>st</sup> question above)
- **Name, phone number, and signature of person in charge of parasite destruction at supplier**



## What information is needed?

## Which fish do not require parasite destruction?

Some types of fish carry parasites while other types do not. A letter for parasite destruction is not required for:

- Molluscan shellfish
- Tuna species: *Thunnus alalunga*, *Thunnus albacares* (Yellowfin tuna), *Thunnus atlanticus*, *Thunnus maccoyii* (Southern Bluefin tuna), *Thunnus obesus* (Bigeye tuna), *Thunnus thynnus* (Northern Bluefin tuna)
- Farm-raised fish (i.e. salmon) that were fed with formulated pellets

If you have any questions or concerns about parasite destruction, contact your Environmental Health Specialist at the Health Department.

Fairfax County Health Department  
A Fairfax County, Va., publication. January 2017.  
To request this information in an alternate format,  
call 703-246-2444, TTY 711.  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health)

