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Florida Department of Health in Bay County Reminds Residents and Visitors to Use Caution in Salt Water and Avoid Eating Raw or Undercooked Seafood



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Panama City, Fla.— According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vibriosis causes an estimated 80,000 illnesses and 100 deaths in the United States every year. Individuals become infected with vibriosis by exposing an open wound to seawater or by consuming raw or undercooked seafood.

Vibrio is a naturally occurring bacteria found in warm salt waters such as the Gulf of Mexico and surrounding bays. Concentrations of this bacteria are higher when the water is warmer.

“The Gulf Coast of Florida has some of the world’s most beautiful beaches and the country’s safest and best tasting seafood. However, individuals should avoid going in the water with open wounds and avoid consuming raw or undercooked seafood,” said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, Administrator and Health Officer DOH-Bay.

People at Risk for Infection

Anyone can get sick from vibriosis. However, individuals can be more likely to develop an infection or have severe complications if they:

- Have liver disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV, or thalassemia.
- Receive immune-suppressing therapy.
- Take medication to decrease stomach acid levels.
- Have had recent stomach surgery.

Symptoms

- Watery diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Chills

Symptoms usually resolve within 24 hours of ingestion and last approximately 3 days.

Prevention

- Don’t eat raw or undercooked oysters or other shellfish.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling raw seafood.

- Avoid cross-contamination by keeping cooked and raw seafood separated.
- Do not go in salt water or brackish water if you have a wound (including recent surgery, piercing or tattoo).
- Wash wounds and cuts thoroughly with soap and water if they have been exposed to seawater or raw seafood or its juices.
- If you develop a skin infection, inform your medical provider if your skin has come in contact with salt water, brackish water, raw seafood, or raw seafood juices.



Visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#) or [The Florida Department of Health website](#) for more information about vibriosis.

About the Florida Department of Health

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