

SHELLFISH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS



Bivalve Shellfish such as oysters, clams, mussels, cockles and scallops are sometimes associated with illnesses caused by bacteria, toxins and viruses.

- ***Vibrio parahaemolyticus (Vp)*** is bacteria that is naturally found in BC coastal waters, especially in the summer.
- **What are the symptoms?** Vp can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea and vomiting.
- **What makes you sick?** Eating raw or under cooked shellfish, or seafood that is contaminated after cooking.
- ***Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP)*** is a potentially **life threatening** toxin found in **Red Tide** and is not the same as Vp.
- **What are the symptoms?** PSP and other marine toxins can cause dizziness, blurred vision, numbness and tingling in the mouth and extremities, and in severe cases respiratory arrest.
- **What makes you sick?** PSP is a heat stable toxin that is not destroyed by cooking. Be aware and check the area is open before you harvest shellfish.

How do you know if an area is open for shellfish harvesting?

Call (604) 666-2828 or toll-free at 1-866-431-3474, contact your local Department of Fisheries and Oceans office (DFO) or visit their web site <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca>.

An area may be considered open by DFO but the shellfish may still contain Vp! To prevent illness follow the steps listed below.

How can you prevent yourself from getting sick?

- Store shellfish refrigerated below 4°C (40°F) or frozen -18°C (0°F) and cook to 90°C (194°F) for 90 seconds.
- Only harvest shellfish at the water's edge when the tide is going out and refrigerate immediately. Only harvest in areas declared open by DFO.
- Wash your hands after handling raw seafood.
- Use only treated drinking water to rinse ready to eat seafood.



What should you do if you get sick? See your doctor and contact the local Health Authority by calling the number in the blue pages of the phone book. For more info see the BC Health Files at <http://www.bchealthguide.org>



BC Centre for Disease Control
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This document can be found at:
<http://www.bccdc.ca>

