

***Vibrio vulnificus* Illness Fact Sheet**

***Vibrio vulnificus* is a bacterium that can cause serious infections**

Although most people can fight off the harmful bacteria, some people may get serious infections.

People can get *Vibrio vulnificus* infections in different ways

The bacterium is only found in saltwater. People with weakened immune systems can get *Vibrio vulnificus* infections by eating contaminated seafood, such as raw or undercooked oysters, clams, mussels, and other shellfish. Healthy people can get *Vibrio vulnificus* infections in cuts or sores that get contaminated with saltwater from a bay or an ocean.

Symptoms to look for after eating raw or undercooked seafood may include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain

Symptoms can start from 12 to 72 hours after eating infected food.

Symptoms to look for from infected cuts or sores are:

- Redness, pain or swelling around the cut that spreads quickly
- Cuts or sores that get larger and deeper or blister

People at higher risk for a serious infection are those who have:

- Chronic liver disease
- Alcoholism
- A weakened immune system (due to medication, HIV or AIDS, etc.)

In these people, the bacteria can infect the blood or cause serious skin infections; symptoms may include fever, chills, and low blood pressure, and can cause death if not treated.

***Vibrio vulnificus* can be treated with antibiotics**

Persons having these signs and symptoms should call a doctor immediately. Make sure to tell the doctor if you have eaten raw or under-cooked seafood or have been exposed to saltwater in the last 3 days.

***Vibrio vulnificus* infection can be prevented**

- Cook shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels) completely. Do not eat shellfish that do not open during cooking.
- Do not eat any raw shellfish.
- Do not let raw seafood touch cooked seafood.
- Eat shellfish as soon as it is cooked and refrigerate leftovers.
- Wear gloves when touching raw shellfish.
- Try to keep open cuts or sores away from raw shellfish caught in saltwater.
- If you have open cuts and sores, do not go into a bay or ocean.