

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* is a bacteria that is naturally found in BC coastal waters, often in the summer.
- **What are the symptoms?** diarrhea, cramps, nausea and vomiting.
- **What makes you sick?** Eating raw or under cooked shellfish, or eating seafood that is contaminated after cooking.
- *Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP)* is a potentially **life threatening** toxin found in **Red Tides** and normal looking tides.
- **What are the symptoms?** dizziness, blurred vision, numbness and tingling in the mouth and extremities, and in severe cases respiratory arrest.
- **What makes you sick?** Cooked or raw shellfish, PSP is not destroyed by cooking. Check the area is open before you harvest shellfish.

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

Call Department of Fisheries and Oceans office at **604-666-2828** or toll-free at **1-866-431-3474**, or visit their web site

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/contamination/biotox/index-eng.htm>

Shellfish in open areas may still contain *Vibrio* bacteria!

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 & 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
AN AGENCY OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY

This document can be found at:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/foodhealth/fish/ShellfishHarvesting.htm>

