



VIBRIOSIS

WHAT IS VIBRIOSIS?

Vibriosis is an intestinal illness caused by one of several types of bacteria (germs) in the *Vibrio* family.

In Washington, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* is the most common type.

The bacteria are found in fish and shellfish living in the sea or in rivers and streams where they meet the ocean (coastal waters).

Most infections of vibriosis occur during the warmer months of summer/fall.

WHO CAN GET VIBRIOSIS?

Anyone who eats raw or undercooked seafood can get vibriosis.

WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF VIBRIOSIS?

Vibriosis causes:

- Watery diarrhea
- Abdominal cramping
- Nausea and vomiting,
- Fever, and chills,
- Headaches

Symptoms usually appear within 12-24 hours of exposure but can range from 4-96 hours.

The illness is usually not severe and usually lasts about 3 days but may last days to weeks.

The bacteria may also cause an infection in the blood or a skin infection.

Skin infections commonly result from swimming in contaminated seawater with broken skin or cuts, or from punctures resulting from handling contaminated shellfish.

HOW IS VIBRIOSIS SPREAD?

A person usually becomes ill with vibriosis after eating contaminated seafood that is raw or undercooked, especially oysters, crabs, and shrimp. However, even fully cooked seafood can be re-contaminated if rinsed with seawater.

Vibriosis is not spread from person to person.

HOW IS VIBRIOSIS DIAGNOSED?

Vibrio bacteria are found in stool (feces) or blood cultures, or drainage from an infected wound.

HOW IS VIBRIOSIS TREATED?

Most vibriosis cases do not require treatment, but antibiotics may be given for severe illness.

HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT VIBRIOSIS?

You can:

- Not eat raw oysters or other raw shellfish. All children and immunocompromised people should avoid eating raw seafood. Refrigerate shellfish immediately upon purchasing and ensure the product is kept cold until preparation.
- Cook oysters, clams, and mussels adequately. Seafood should reach a minimum internal temperature of 145°F (63°C) for 15 seconds. Do not eat those shellfish that do not open during cooking. Refrigerate all uneaten seafood immediately.
- Wear gloves when handling raw shellfish and wash your hands well after handling.
- If you have breaks on your skin, rinse your skin well with fresh water after exposure to coastal waters, or avoid exposure completely when you have broken skin.
- Before harvesting shellfish, consult the 24-hour PSP Hotline 1-800-562-5632 or the DOH Emergency Closures due to Marine Biotoxins and *Vibrio* website for information on closed shellfish harvest areas.
- Avoid cross-contamination of cooked seafood and other foods with raw seafood and juices from raw seafood.

Vibriosis is a Washington State reportable disease and must be reported to the local health department. In Lewis County, contact Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response at 360-740-1223 during business hours, or 360-740-1105 after hours and ask to speak to the health officer.



WHEN SHOULD I STAY HOME FROM WORK, SCHOOL, OR CHILDCARE?

YOU SHOULD NOT ATTEND WORK, SCHOOL, OR CHILDCARE IF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING APPLIES:

- You have had a fever, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- You do not feel well enough to participate in regular activities.