



VIBRIOSIS (non-cholera *Vibrio* species infection)

What is VIBRIOSIS?

Vibriosis is an intestinal disease caused by small bacteria called *Vibrio*, which are found in fish and shellfish in the sea, or rivers and streams where they meet the ocean. There are several types of *Vibrio* including *V. parahaemolyticus*, *V. vulnificus*, and *V. cholerae*, serogroup non-O1 and non-O139, that can cause illness.

What are the symptoms of vibriosis?

The incubation period is short, 12-24 hours or 12-72 hours for *V. vulnificus*. Symptoms include diarrhea, which may be bloody; abdominal cramping, fever, vomiting and headache. Symptoms can last 6-7 days. Wound infections may also occur if exposed to contaminated waters. Non-O1 and non-O139 serotypes do NOT produce toxins.

Who gets *Vibrio* infections?

Illness may occur in anyone eating contaminated shellfish. Bloodstream infections (septicemia) can occur in people with liver cirrhosis or who are immunocompromised, but this is relatively rare. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned individuals with liver disease to refrain from consuming raw or improperly cooked shellfish. Wound infections can occur when open wounds are exposed to warm coastal waters.

What are some foods associated with infection?

Shellfish harvested from U.S. coastal waters frequently contain *Vibrio* species. Consumption of raw, improperly cooked or cooked shellfish may lead to infection. Infected food handlers may contaminate other foods.

How common are *Vibrio* infections?

No major outbreaks of diarrhea are documented due to *Vibrio*. Sporadic cases occur frequently, mainly along the coasts of the U.S., and are usually associated with the consumption of raw oysters during the warmer months.

What are some preventive measures?

- Avoid eating raw or undercooked shellfish such as oysters and clams.
- Ensure shellfish are harvested from approved shellfish gathering waters.
- Keep shellfish cold after harvesting.
- Avoid cross contamination from raw to cooked foods.
- Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables.
- Wash and clean all cuts and wounds after being exposed to seawater.