

# Vibrios Illness (Vibriosis)

## What is vibriosis?

- Vibrios illness is caused by bacteria found naturally in seawater environments, like bay or gulf waters.
- Vibrio infections occur with exposure to seawater or consumption of raw or undercooked contaminated seafood.
- Vibriosis includes 2 different types of infections: *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (*V. parahaemolyticus*) and *Vibrio vulnificus* (*V. vulnificus*).
- All vibriosis infections must be reported to the Alabama Department of Public Health.

## What are the symptoms of vibriosis?

- General vibrios illness symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, chills, fever, shock, skin lesions, and wound infections.
- *V. parahaemolyticus* typically causes non-bloody diarrhea.
- *V. vulnificus* can cause in people who are immunocompromised, for example liver disease or cancer, to be at higher risk for serious complications. For high-risk people, *V. vulnificus* typically infects the bloodstream, causing a life-threatening illness.

## How does vibriosis spread?

- *V. parahaemolyticus* and *V. vulnificus* generally are not passed person-to-person.
- Vibriosis infections occur when people eat raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters.
- Less commonly, vibriosis can cause an infection in the skin when an open wound is exposed to warm seawater.

## How do I stop the spread of Vibriosis?

- Most *V. parahaemolyticus* and *V. vulnificus* in the United States can be prevented by:
  - Thoroughly cooking seafood, especially oysters.
  - Avoiding exposure of open wounds to warm seawater.
  - Closing oyster beds when an outbreak is traced to an oyster bed by health officials recommend, until vibrios levels are lower.

## What should I do if I suspect I have vibriosis?

- Contact your healthcare provider to determine if you have contracted vibriosis.
- For most cases of *V. parahaemolyticus* infection treatment is not necessary. There is no evidence that antibiotic treatment decreases the severity or the length of the illness. Patients should drink plenty of liquids to replace fluids lost through diarrhea.
- For *V. vulnificus* cases, treatment should be initiated immediately because antibiotics improve survival. Aggressive attention should be given to the wound site and amputation of the infected limb is sometimes necessary.

## Where can I find more information?

- Go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and type vibrio illness or vibriosis in SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

800-338-8374 [www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases) 11/01/2017