

VIBRIOSIS FACTSHEET

What is vibriosis?

About a dozen *Vibrio* species can cause human illness, known as vibriosis. The most common species causing human illness in the United States are *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, *Vibrio vulnificus*, and *Vibrio alginolyticus*.

Who can get vibriosis?

Anyone can get sick from vibriosis, but you may be more likely to get an infection or severe complications if you:

- Have liver disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV, or thalassemia
- Receive immune-suppressing therapy for the treatment of disease
- Take medicine to decrease stomach acid levels
- Have had recent stomach surgery
- Eating raw seafood, particularly oysters, and exposing open wounds to salt water or brackish water (a mixture of fresh and salt water, often found where rivers meet the sea) can increase a person's chance for getting vibriosis.

What are the symptoms of vibriosis?

When ingested, *Vibrio* bacteria can cause watery diarrhea, often accompanied by abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, fever, and chills.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically appear within 24 hours of ingestion and last about 3 days. Severe illness is rare and typically occurs in people with a weakened immune system.

How does vibriosis spread?

There is no evidence of person-to-person spread.

How is vibriosis treated?

Treatment is not necessary in mild cases, but patients should drink plenty of liquids to replace fluids lost through diarrhea. Although there is no evidence that antibiotics decrease the severity or duration of illness,

they are sometimes used in severe or prolonged illnesses.

How can a person protect themselves against vibriosis?

You can reduce your risk of vibriosis by following these tips:

- Don't eat raw or undercooked oysters or other shellfish. Cook them before eating.
- Always [wash your hands](#) with soap and water after handling raw shellfish.
- Avoid contaminating cooked shellfish with raw shellfish and its juices.
- Stay out of salt water or brackish water if you have a wound (including from a recent surgery, piercing, or tattoo), or cover your wound with a waterproof bandage if there's a possibility it could come into contact with salt water or brackish water, raw seafood, or raw seafood juices. Brackish water is a mixture of fresh and salt water. It is often found where rivers meet the sea.
- Wash wounds and cuts thoroughly with soap and water if they have been exposed to seawater or raw seafood or its juices.
- If you develop a skin infection, tell your medical provider if your skin has come into contact with salt water or brackish water, raw seafood, or raw seafood juices.
- If you are in a group more likely to get vibriosis: Wear clothes and shoes that can protect you from cuts and scrapes when in salt water or brackish water and wear protective gloves when handling raw seafood.

Where can I get more information?

Information about shigellosis and other related health topics can be found at www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit <https://dchealth.dc.gov> or call (202) 442-9021.