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HEALTH OFFICIALS CONFIRM VIBRIO VULNIFICUS CASE IN ESCAMBIA COUNTY

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PENSACOLA, FL – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (DOH-Escambia) is investigating a death related to a *Vibrio vulnificus* infection.

DOH-Escambia urges residents to take precautions against infection and illness by avoiding eating raw or undercooked oysters and other shellfish or exposing open wounds to seawater and estuarine water.

Vibrio vulnificus is a bacterium that usually lives in warm, brackish seawater. These bacteria typically grow faster during warmer months. People with open wounds, cuts, or scratches can be exposed to *Vibrio vulnificus* through direct contact with seawater or estuarine water. Also, *Vibrio vulnificus* can cause disease in those who eat raw or undercooked oysters and shellfish. *Vibrio vulnificus* has the potential to cause severe illness or death.

Healthy individuals typically develop a mild disease; however, *Vibrio vulnificus* infections can be severe for people with weakened immune systems.

- Symptoms of *Vibrio vulnificus* can include vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.
- Wound infection can lead to skin breakdown and blistering.
- In persons with weakened immune systems, particularly those with chronic liver disease, *Vibrio vulnificus* can invade the bloodstream, causing a severe, life-threatening illness with symptoms like fever, chills, decreased blood pressure (septic shock), and blistering skin lesions.

Individuals experiencing these symptoms should contact a physician immediately for diagnosis and treatment. Individuals with wound infections should also seek care promptly.

TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE

1. Thoroughly cook oysters and other shellfish by frying, stewing, or roasting to eliminate harmful bacteria and viruses in the meat.
2. Avoid exposing open wounds, cuts, or scratches to seawater or estuarine water.
3. Immediately clean and monitor wounds received in the marine environment or from uncooked shellfish; seek immediate medical care if signs of infection occur.

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

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