



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **PUBLIC WARNED ABOUT CONSUMPTION OF RAW SHELLFISH**

*Three Infections Reported; Bacteria Typically Increases Every Summer*

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency's Public Health Services has received reports of three cases of human infections caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, a common bacteria in salt water that typically is found in higher concentrations in the summer.

Any oyster or mussel may be contaminated. The source of the contaminated shellfish is still being determined. The three people have recovered.

"This underscores the need to exercise caution when consuming raw shellfish," said Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County Public Health Officer. "Most infections caused by this bacteria can be prevented by thoroughly cooking shellfish, especially oysters."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the bacteria can cause gastrointestinal illness, specifically watery diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, fever and chills. Symptoms occur within 24 hours of consumption and usually lasts three days; severe disease is rare and happens more commonly in those who have weakened immune systems. If you suspect you may be infected with this bacteria, contact your physician and be sure to drink plenty of fluids.

The San Diego County Department of Environmental Health, Public Health Services and California Department of Health Services Food and Drug branch, Seafood Safety unit are working together to identify a possible common source of the contaminated shellfish.

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