

# Vibrio Infections

## Information for Health Care Providers

In recent years, between 30 and 60 cases of *Vibrio* infections have been reported annually in Maryland. Others often go unrecognized and unreported.

### Types

- *Vibrio vulnificus*
- *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*
- Other species can also cause illness.

### Exposure Pathways

- **WATER:** Having open wounds and contact with salt or brackish water during the warmer months; this includes the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries
- **FOOD:** Consumption of raw or undercooked shellfish (especially oysters) or having open wounds and contact with raw shellfish or their drippings

### Clinical Presentations

- Rapid-onset skin and soft tissue infections
- Gastrointestinal illness
- Sepsis
- Other infections (such as ear and sinus infections)

### Other Pathogens to Consider

- **SKIN AND SOFT TISSUE INFECTIONS:**
  - **Other waterborne bacteria** such as *Aeromonas* species, *Shewanella* species, *Mycobacterium marinum* and others
  - **Non-waterborne bacteria** such as Strep, Staph, community-acquired MRSA, etc.
- **GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS:** Other foodborne pathogens such as *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*, *Campylobacter*

**Identification** - culture

**Treatment** - see cdc.gov



### Key Questions for Patients

- Have you had any recent skin contact with ocean water or water from the Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries?
- Have you recently eaten raw or undercooked shellfish?
- Have you recently handled raw shellfish, their drippings or anything that was used to hold or prepare the raw shellfish and had open wounds?

Inform patients at higher risk of severe *Vibrio*-related illness and death about the risks associated with eating raw shellfish and coming in contact with salt or brackish water while having open wounds. Conditions that increase risk include: chronic liver disease, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, cancer, hemochromatosis, stomach disorders and weakened immune systems, including HIV.

**Report all *Vibrio* infections to your local health department.**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
bit.ly/DHMHhealthyswimming  
toll-free 1-866-703-3266

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**  
mde.maryland.gov/vibrio  
410-537-3906 | toll-free 1-800-633-6101 ext. 3906

**MARYLAND HEALTHY BEACHES**  
marylandhealthybeaches.com/vibrio.html



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