# Vibrio Species Causing Vibriosis

**Sources**

Most people become infected by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters. Certain *Vibrio* species can also cause a skin infection when an open wound is exposed to salt water or brackish water. Brackish water is a mixture of fresh water and salt water. It is often found where rivers meet the sea.

**Incubation period**

- Vibrio wound infection: 1–7 days
- Gastrointestinal illness: 2–48 hours

**Symptoms**

- **In healthy people:** Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- **In high-risk people:** Sudden chills, fever, shock, skin lesions

**Duration of illness**

3 days, when spread through food. Duration of wound infections is variable.

**What to do**

If you have symptoms within a few days after eating raw or undercooked seafood, especially oysters, or develop a skin infection after being exposed to salt water or brackish water, contact your doctor. **Don’t chance it!** Some *Vibrio* species, such as *Vibrio vulnificus*, can cause particularly severe and life-threatening infections.

**Prevention**

- 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 cuts and scrapes), 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.
- Wash wounds and cuts thoroughly with soap and water if they have been exposed to seawater or raw seafood or its juices.
If you are in a group more likely to get a *Vibrio* infection, such as people with liver disease:

- Wear clothes and shoes that can protect you from cuts and scrapes when in salt water or brackish water.
- Wear protective gloves when handling raw seafood.

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