# Vibrio Species Causing Vibriosis

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<th>Sources</th>
<th>Most people become infected by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters. Certain <em>Vibrio</em> 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.</th>
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| Incubation period | • *V. vulnificus*: 1 to 7 days  
• *V. parahaemolyticus*: 4 to 30 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](https://www.foodsafety.gov) 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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