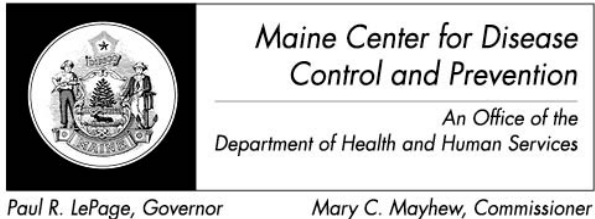


# Vibriosis

## Fact Sheet



### What is Vibriosis?

Vibriosis is an infection caused by one of many types of *Vibrio* bacteria or germs. These germs are often found in salty, coastal waters in the United States and Canada. They are present in higher numbers in the summer.

Several different types of *Vibrio* have caused illness in Maine. Most infections in Maine are wound infections.

Cholera is a type of vibriosis that causes watery stools (diarrhea) and vomiting, and can cause death. It is not common in the United States, but is a risk for travelers to other countries.

### How can I get it?

Most people become infected by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, especially oysters. Skin may get infected if an open cut or sore has contact with warm sea water. The infection is not passed from one person to another.

### What are the symptoms?

When swallowed, the germ causes watery stools often with belly cramping, nausea, vomiting, fever and chills. This will usually happen within 24 hours of eating. Illness usually goes away on its own after about 3 days.

Some of these germs can also cause a skin infection with redness, heat and pus if an open cut or sore has contact with warm sea water.

Persons with weak immune systems or liver disease are at higher risk of getting an infection in their blood.

### How would I know if I have it?

Your healthcare provider may take a sample of stool, wound, or blood to test for *Vibrio* species. He/she may suspect vibriosis if you have watery stools and have eaten raw or undercooked seafood, especially oysters, or if a wound gets infected after contact with sea water.

### Can it be treated?

Treatment is not needed in most cases. Your health care provider may decide to treat you if you have severe watery stools, an infected wound, or a blood infection. Patients should drink lots of liquids to replace lost fluids.

### How can it be prevented?

Most infections from *Vibrio* species in the United States can be prevented by:

- Cooking seafood, especially oysters at the appropriate temperature for the appropriate length of time.
- Keeping open wounds from warm sea water

### Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact:

- The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention: 1-800-821-5821 or [www.mainepublichealth.gov](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov).
- The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov>
- The Maine Department of Marine Resources Shellfish Monitoring Program: [http://www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/public\\_health/](http://www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/public_health/).