



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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CT Dept. of Agriculture: Vibrio Control Plans Protect Public and Shellfish Industry

(HARTFORD, CONN.) - Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, announced today that the state's Bureau of Aquaculture is implementing plans to prevent consumer illness stemming from a naturally-occurring bacteria, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, that could infect shellfish farmed in warmer waters.

"The agency is working with commercial shellfish growers to establish comprehensive Vibrio control plans to help prevent the proliferation of this bacteria and related consumer illnesses," Commissioner Reviczky said. "While other states have seen infection, our efforts and the diligence of our shellfish harvesters have prevented any such outbreaks of Vibrio in Connecticut this summer."

The Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture, the shellfish authority for the state, is taking precautionary measures to prevent outbreaks including testing for Vibrio in shellfish growing areas and instituting precautionary closures in areas that showed elevated levels of the bacteria.

Consumers may be exposed to disease-causing bacteria by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, including oysters, clams, lobster, and crab. Vibriosis symptoms usually appear 12-24 hours after eating infected shellfish and can include diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, headache, fever, and chills. Illness may last two to seven days and can severely impact the health of individuals with existing health problems.

To reduce the risk of illness from Vibrio bacteria, consumers should only purchase shellfish from reputable dealers with good practices for handling and refrigerating shellfish, and should only harvest shellfish recreationally from permitted areas. All shellfish should be stored at temperatures below 45°F until consumed and should be cooked to an internal temperature of 145° F for at least 15 seconds to kill the bacteria. Steaming shellfish just enough to cause the shells to open is not sufficient to kill Vibrio bacteria. To avoid re-contamination, never rinse cooked seafood in seawater. Consumers should consult their healthcare providers to assess their risk or for treatment if Vibrio is suspected.

[Additional information](#) on the harvesting and handling of shellfish, or to locate local shellfish hotline numbers to [check the status of shellfish beds](#) visit www.ctgrown.gov/aquaculture . Contact the [Bureau of Aquaculture](#) at 203-874-0696 with questions concerning shellfish growing areas.

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