

Marylanders' Guide to Skin Wounds and Water Contact

Vibrio are bacteria that naturally occur in brackish water like the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and in salt water, especially during warm weather months.

Vibrio infections are rare. However, when *Vibrio* comes into contact with an open wound, it can cause serious infections characterized by unusual redness, swelling and drainage.

This can be particularly dangerous for people with weakened immune systems.



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST *VIBRIO*

- Avoid water contact if you have any skin wounds.
- If water contact cannot be avoided, cover wounds with water-proof bandages.
- Clean wounds immediately with soap and clean water after contact. If soap and clean water are not available, clean the wound with hand sanitizer then wash as soon as possible.
- Wear water shoes to avoid cuts and scrapes.
- Wear gloves and use extra care when handling crab pots or other equipment.
- Always shower after swimming in natural waters and wash hands before handling food or eating.

If you develop a wound with unusual redness, swelling or drainage, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY and let your healthcare provider know if you came in contact with brackish or salt water.

For more information, check out
Maryland Healthy Beaches: Facts about Vibrio Bacteria at
marylandhealthybeaches.com/vibrio.html



Vibrio Infections

Information for Health Care Providers

Over the past few years, between 25 and 45 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 SOURCES

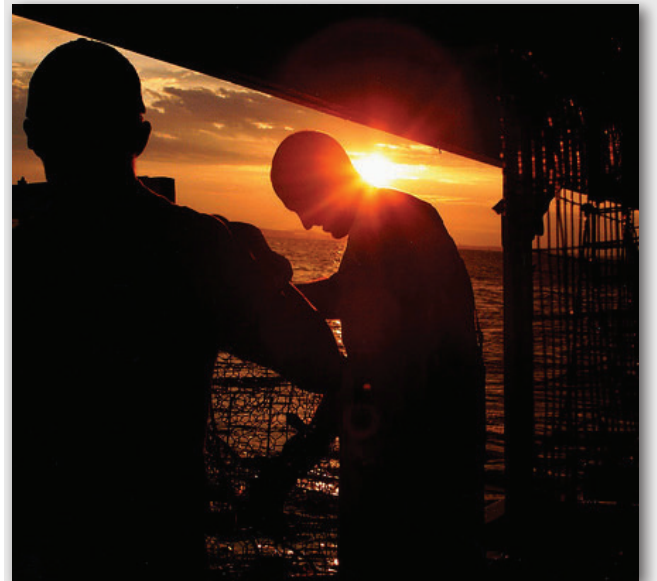
eating *Vibrio*-contaminated shellfish
direct skin exposure to salt or brackish water containing the bacteria, including the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries during the warmer months.

CLINICAL PRESENTATIONS

skin and soft tissue infections
gastrointestinal illness
sepsis

IDENTIFICATION culture

TREATMENT see cdc.gov



People with chronic liver disease, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, or those with weakened immune systems are at a higher risk of *Vibrio*-related illness. Such patients should be informed about the risks associated with eating raw shellfish and coming in contact with salt or brackish water.

Report all suspected or confirmed *Vibrio* infections to your local health department.

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