



# *Vibrio vulnificus*

## trouble on the half shell?

## 10 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. *Vibrio vulnificus* (Vv) infection is a **rare but serious disease** caused by bacteria commonly found in ocean waters and shellfish.
2. Vv can cause **infection in both healthy and immunocompromised** people. The infection tends to be more severe, and sometimes fatal, in people with weakened immune systems.
3. You can be infected with Vv by eating **raw or undercooked** bivalve shellfish (such as **oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops**) or by **exposing open wounds to seawater** or raw seafood juices.
4. People with the **most risk for serious infection** include those with liver disease, diabetes, iron overload disease, hemolytic anemia, or **severely compromised immunity** (such as cancer patients, organ transplant recipients, and people with HIV).
5. Symptoms often occur **within 24 to 48 hours** after exposure, but they may take longer to appear.

**6.-10. ON BACK**



6. Among healthy people, Vv can cause **vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.**
7. Among immunocompromised people, Vv **may infect the bloodstream**, causing fever and chills, blistering skin lesions, and septic shock.
8. **Wound infections** can lead to blistering skin lesions and severe skin damage.
9. Vv infections in persons who are immunocompromised have a **50% fatality rate**. Death can occur within 1–2 days of becoming ill.
10. **Preventing Vv infection is easy.** Cook shellfish thoroughly before eating. Avoid cross-contaminating ready-to-eat foods with raw seafood and its juices. Keep seawater and raw seafood juices away from open wounds.

**If you have a condition that puts you at risk for Vv, talk to your doctor about how to stay healthy.**

## **FISH AROUND FOR MORE ABOUT FOOD SAFETY**

**Be oyster aware: [BeOysterAware.com](http://BeOysterAware.com)**

**Food Safety (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services): [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov)**

**Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference: [ISSC.org](http://ISSC.org)**

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