

Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation Administration
Division of Epidemiology – Disease Surveillance and Investigation

July 16, 2018

Health Notice for District of Columbia Healthcare Providers ***Vibrio Parahaemolyticus* Disease Cluster Investigation**

Summary

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local partners, are investigating a multi-state outbreak of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* illnesses that are linked to fresh crab meat from Venezuela (see [outbreak link](#)). The District of Columbia Department of Health (DC Health) has identified several cases of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* infection in individuals reporting crab meat consumption. DC Health is working closely with CDC and FDA to determine whether there is a potential linkage between the DC cases and the outbreak. We ask that you maintain a high index of suspicion for *Vibrio* infection among patients presenting with gastrointestinal illness, particularly those who report recent seafood consumption. A stool specimen should be collected for appropriate laboratory testing and all *Vibrio* infections should be reported to DC Health.

Background

Vibrio bacteria naturally live in certain coastal waters and are present in higher concentrations between May and October when water temperatures are warmer. People are commonly exposed to *Vibrio* by eating raw or undercooked shellfish or through water exposure. Wound infections may occur when wounds or soft tissues are exposed to brackish or salt water. Vibriosis is typically characterized by watery diarrhea, usually with abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, and fever. While *Vibrio* bacteria can also cause wound or soft tissue infections, none of the people in this cluster have reported contact with water as a likely cause of illness. People with underlying conditions, such as alcoholism and liver disease, or who are immunocompromised are at increased risk of infection and serious complications.

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers

Diagnostic Testing for *Vibrio*

Diagnostic testing for *Vibrio* is generally performed with culture or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing.* Please note:

- *Vibrio* testing is generally NOT part of routine stool culture testing for enteric pathogens and must be specifically requested.
- *Vibrio* testing are included in several commercially available laboratory tests.

*Samples positive for *Vibrio* should be submitted to the DC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) for additional testing along with the appropriate paperwork (<https://dfs.dc.gov/publication/phl-forms-and-documents>)

Reporting

- All cases of vibriosis are required to be reported to DC Health so that we can identify and appropriately investigate cases that may be part of clusters or outbreaks and to accurately assess the burden of disease in the District.
- Cases should be reported online using the Notifiable Disease and Condition Case Report Form, which can be accessed on our website: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/infectious-diseases>.

References

1. CDC's Vibrio for Health Professionals website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vibrio/healthcare.html>
2. CDC's Outbreak link:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vibrio/investigations/vibriop-07-18/index.html>

Please contact the DC Health Division of Epidemiology–Disease Surveillance and Investigation for more information:

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