

***Vibrio vulnificus* information:**

- *Vibrio* bacteria species occur naturally in estuaries and usually are harmless to humans. A small portion, however, can cause serious food-borne illness or wound infections. The species *Vibrio vulnificus* is the most lethal of these and the #1 cause of shellfish-associated fatalities in the U.S.
- *Vibrio* bacteria are not the result of fecal or chemical pollution entering the bays. They occur naturally in warm coastal areas. Warmer waters promote *Vibrio* growth.
- Historically, *V. vulnificus* have mostly been found in the southeastern U.S. But as sea surface temperatures rise, cases of *V. vulnificus* infections are becoming more common in places that used to be too cold for them to be common. (Documented in a recently published paper in *Annals of Internal Medicine*; other published research also suggests that this trend is happening).
- Recent research at the Univ. of DE shows that *Vibrio* bacteria may become more abundant in the Bays when some types of algae bloom in response to excess nutrients in the water.
- Most healthy people are not at high risk for *Vibrio* infections. People with compromised immune systems or liver disease are most vulnerable.
- There is no need to avoid bay waters. But take common sense precautions, such as:
 - Wounds and water don't mix- do not go into the water with a cut or open wound.
 - If you do get cut, wash and disinfect the wound; see a doctor immediately if there is any sign of or concern about infection.
 - Pay attention to beach closures and do not harvest shellfish from prohibited areas.
 - Cooking seafood kills associated bacteria. Do not consume raw oysters or clams if you are in a high-risk group (immune-compromised, liver disease, cancer, etc.)