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.)