

EASY C FACTS

Vibrio

If you have hepatitis C (HCV or Hep C for short) you should avoid eating raw or undercooked shellfish – oysters, clams, and mussels. *Vibrio vulnificus* (*Vibrio* for short) is a bacterium that lives in warm salty water. In addition to getting *Vibrio* from eating raw or undercooked shellfish, you can also get it from swallowing water with *Vibrio* in it or *Vibrio* can enter the body when you have any open cuts or wounds when you are wading in or swimming in water that contains *Vibrio*.

The most common symptoms of *Vibrio* are diarrhea, stomach aches and cramping, feeling sick to the stomach, vomiting, fever, and chills and can occur anytime between 5 hours to 4 days. In severe cases you can have a drop in blood pressure and open sores that do not heal. If you think you have been exposed to *Vibrio*, see a doctor as soon as possible because the infection can be very serious and may even lead to death.

It is important to remember....

- ◆ Do not eat any raw oysters or other types of shellfish
- ◆ Cook any shellfish thoroughly – if the shellfish does not open during cooking – do not eat it
- ◆ Clean up any fluids while preparing the shellfish – do not let anything come into contact with anything else that touched the shellfish – this includes hands, knives, spoons, surface areas, etc.
- ◆ Wear gloves when cleaning shellfish
- ◆ Wash hands thoroughly after handling shellfish
- ◆ Cover any open cuts or wounds – never wade in warm salty water if you have an open cut or wound
- ◆ Seek immediate medical attention if you have been exposed