



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CONTACT: [Orville Thomas](#)
(916) 440-7259

CDPH Reminds of Warning on Razor Clams from Humboldt and Del Norte Counties

SACRAMENTO - California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith today is reminding consumers not to eat recreationally harvested razor clams from Humboldt or Del Norte counties. CDPH issued [news releases in August 2015](#) and [December 2015](#) warning against eating razor clams, and recent testing shows that dangerous levels of the domoic acid toxin continue to be present in these clams.

“CDPH is aware that people may have forgotten about this warning over the winter, and are anxious to take advantage of good weather and good clamming tides,” said Dr. Smith. “However, these toxins are still present so it’s very important that people pay attention to this warning.”

Razor clams are known to retain domoic acid for long periods of time, in some cases more than a year. The toxin concentration found in razor clams from Humboldt County late last year was the highest ever recorded on the West Coast, and was more than 10 times the federal action level.

Domoic acid, also known as Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP), can cause illness or death in humans. No cases of human poisoning from domoic acid are known to have occurred in California.

Symptoms of domoic acid poisoning can occur within 30 minutes to 24 hours after eating toxic seafood. In mild cases, symptoms may include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache and dizziness. These symptoms disappear within several days. In severe cases, the victim may experience trouble breathing, confusion, disorientation, cardiovascular instability, seizures, excessive bronchial secretions, permanent loss of short term memory, coma or death.

These warnings do not apply to commercially sold clams, mussels, scallops or oysters from approved sources. State law permits only state-certified commercial shellfish harvesters or dealers to sell these products. Shellfish sold by certified harvesters and dealers are subject to frequent mandatory testing to monitor for toxins.

For the most current information about shellfish poisoning and health advisories, call CDPH’s toll-free “Shellfish Information Line” at (800) 553-4133. For additional information visit CDPH’s [Preharvest Shellfish Protection and Marine Biotoxin Monitoring Program Web Page](#).

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