



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Final Dungeness Crab Health Advisory Lifted Along California Coast**

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith today has lifted the last remaining health advisory for Dungeness crab caught along the California coast.

The final advisory lifted today was for Dungeness crabs caught in ocean waters north of 40°46.15' N Latitude (a line extending due west from the west end of the north jetty at the entrance of Humboldt Bay) and south of 41° 17.60' N Latitude (a line extending due west from the mouth of Redwood Creek, Humboldt County). Recent tests show traces of domoic acid have declined to low or undetectable levels in Dungeness crabs caught in these areas.

“I know this announcement is one that people in California have been waiting for, whether it affects their livelihood or their ability to enjoy Dungeness crabs at the dinner table,” said Dr. Smith. “We appreciate everyone who has paid attention to the warnings and remind everyone that conditions can change, so it’s important to stay informed.”

CDPH and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment concur that meat from Dungeness crabs caught along the coast line is safe to consume. However, **consumers are advised to not eat the viscera (internal organs, also known as “butter” or “guts”) of crabs.** The viscera usually contain much higher levels of domoic acid than crab body meat. When whole crabs are cooked in liquid, domoic acid may leach from the viscera into the cooking liquid. Water or broth used to cook whole crabs should be discarded and not used to prepare dishes such as sauces, broths, soups or stews (for example, cioppino or gumbo), stocks, roux, dressings or dips.

The best ways to reduce risk are:

- 1) Remove the crab viscera and rinse out the body cavity prior to cooking, or
- 2) Boil or steam whole crabs, instead of frying or broiling, and discard cooking liquids.

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 (a condition known as Amnesic Shellfish

Poisoning), coma or death. There have been no confirmed illnesses associated with this year's domoic acid event.

Domoic acid accumulation in seafood is a natural occurrence that is related to a "bloom" of a particular single-celled plant. The conditions that support the growth of this plant are impossible to predict. While the bloom that occurred last year has dissipated, it takes a period of time for the organisms feeding on the phytoplankton to eliminate the domoic acid from their bodies.

To receive updated information about shellfish poisoning and quarantines, call CDPH's toll-free Shellfish Information Line at (800) 553-4133. For additional information, visit CDPH's [Natural Marine Toxins: PSP and Domoic Acid Web page](#) and CDPH's [Domoic Acid health information Web page](#).

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