

# **WATER CONTACT ADVISORY**

**Shewanella Algae and Vibrio skin infections have been reported to the Calvert County Health Department**

Shewanella Algae and Vibrio are two bacteria's that naturally occur in warm, salty waters. Both species are found in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. These species are known to cause serious infections in humans if they enter open wounds or are consumed through undercooked shellfish. **DO NOT** enter these waters if you have any **exposed cuts or open wounds of the skin**. Consult a health care provider immediately if signs or symptoms of skin infection, such as redness, soreness, swelling or drainage occur following water contact.

Avoid gastrointestinal illness caused by these organisms by ensuring that all shellfish are thoroughly cooked.

For more information visit: [www.calverthealth.org](http://www.calverthealth.org)

Posted by the authority of the

**Calvert County Health Officer**

# Marylander's Guide to Skin Wounds and Water Contact

Vibrio and Shewanella Algae are both bacterial species that naturally inhabit brackish waters such as the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Both species are found in warm salt water and are also found in shellfish.

Infections caused by these organisms are typically a result of contact with an open wound or by consuming uncooked shellfish. These infections can be very serious and without prompt treatment can cause death.



## How to protect yourself

- Avoid water contact if you have any skin wounds.
- If you get a cut or scrape, clean it immediately with soap and water after contact. If soap and clean water are not available, clean the wound with hand sanitizer, then wash the wound with soap and water as soon as possible.
- If water contact cannot be avoided, cover wounds with waterproof bandages.
- Wear water shoes to avoid cuts and scrapes.
- Wear gloves and use extra care when handling crab pots or other equipment.
- Always shower after swimming in natural waters and wash hands before handling food or eating.

**If you develop a wound with unusual redness, swelling, drainage or discharge, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY and let your healthcare provider know if you came in contact with brackish or salt water.**

**To learn more about Vibrio, Shewanella Algae, and safe swimming practices visit:**

**Maryland Department of the Environment**

[mde.maryland.gov/vibrio](http://mde.maryland.gov/vibrio)

410-537-3906 \* toll-free 1-800-633-6101  
ext. 3906

**Maryland Healthy Beaches**

<https://www.marylandhealthybeaches.com/vibrio.html>

**Maryland Department of Health and  
Mental Hygiene**

[Phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/OEHFP/CHS/  
sitepages/healthyswimming.aspx](http://Phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/OEHFP/CHS/sitepages/healthyswimming.aspx)

Toll-free 1-866-703-3266

**Calvert County Health Department**

[www.calverthealth.org](http://www.calverthealth.org)  
410-535-5400

