

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services

Health Advisory:

Vibriosis Cases in Eastern Missouri

June 29, 2012

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The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

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Health Advisory
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FROM: MARGARET T. DONNELLY
DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Vibriosis Cases in Eastern Missouri

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is investigating a cluster of cases of Vibriosis in eastern Missouri which were identified June 27-28, 2012. Three cases of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* have been identified during this time period. Typically, this infection is associated with eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters. The investigation is ongoing. DHSS recommends that any person who has signs or symptoms of acute gastroenteritis after consuming raw or undercooked shellfish should seek medical care. Health care providers should consider obtaining stool cultures for Vibriosis in such patients.

Vibriosis is caused by *Vibrio* bacteria, such as *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* that grow in coastal waters. Risk factors for acquiring gastrointestinal *Vibrio* infections include: eating raw or undercooked shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels) or crabs; or cross-contamination of other foods and surfaces with raw shellfish or crabs during preparation.

Disease symptoms may include: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and in some cases, signs of severe infection (septicemia), including fever and low blood pressure.

Symptoms can start from 4 to 96 hours after eating contaminated food. Vibriosis can be a mild to serious disease. People with weakened immune systems – especially those with liver disease, diabetes, and peptic ulcers – are at highest risk for serious disease. The infection is not normally communicable from person to person.

Vibrio organisms can be isolated from the stool of patients with gastroenteritis, from blood specimens, and from wound exudates. Because identification of the organism in stool requires special techniques, laboratory personnel should be notified when infection with *Vibrio* species is suspected.

Vibrio infections can be treated with antibiotics. Most episodes of diarrhea are mild and self-limited, and do not require treatment other than oral rehydration. Antibiotics are indicated in people with wound infections, severe diarrhea, or septicemia. Septicemia should be treated with a third-generation cephalosporin plus doxycycline. In younger children, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole and aminoglycoside is an alternative regimen.

Medical providers are required to report, within three days, suspected or diagnosed cases of Vibriosis. Reports can be made to the local public health agency, or to DHSS at 800/392-0272 (24/7).

Questions should be directed to DHSS' Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at 573/751-6268, or 800/392-0272 (24/7).