Neurotoxic Shellfish Poisoning

Merlin disease code=98800
Case report form (CRF): None
NO CRF REQUIRED

**Clinical criteria for case classification**
Onset is within a few minutes to a few hours after consumption of epidemiologically implicated shellfish (typically clams, mussels, oysters, whelks and certain gastropods). Symptoms include tingling and numbness of lips, mouth, fingers, and toes; muscular aches; ataxia, and dizziness and usually accompanied by diarrhea, vomiting and/or nausea. Symptoms sometimes include reversal of hot and cold sensations; pupil dilation; and respiratory distress. Illness is self-limited and generally milder than paralytic shellfish poisoning; some patients have required ICU support for respiratory distress. Duration is from a few hours to a few days.

**Laboratory criteria for case classification**
Detection of toxin (brevetoxin) in epidemiologically implicated shellfish.

**Epidemiological criteria for case classification**
Either of the following:
- A person who consumed shellfish with a positive laboratory finding (brevetoxin)
- Or a person who consumed shellfish from areas where other toxic shellfish have been found or where red tide is documented (shellfish beds closed in region by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services).

**Case classification**
Confirmed:
A clinically compatible illness in a person with epidemiological criteria.

**Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports**
Not applicable.

**Comments**
Contact your Regional Environmental Epidemiologist for information.

Return to Table of Contents