Saxitoxin Poisoning (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning)

Merlin disease code=98840
Case report form (CRF): None
NO CRF REQUIRED

Clinical criteria for case classification
A person with circumoral paresthesia; numbness or tingling of the face, arms, and legs; ataxia; respiratory distress; headache; dizziness; weakness; nausea; or vomiting. Onset is 15 minutes to 10 hours following the consumption of puffer fish. Illness can also be linked to consumption of molluscan shellfish from non-Florida waters such as from northern Pacific and other cold water sources (not known to be present in molluscan shellfish in Florida at this time). In severe cases, muscle paralysis and respiratory failure occur, with death occurring in 2 to 25 hours. Cases associated with Florida puffer fish consumption experience milder symptoms and fewer hospitalizations.

Laboratory criteria for case classification
Toxin detection in urine or food sample.

Epidemiological criteria for case classification
Either of the following:
- A person who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed saxitoxin poisoning case
- Or a person with a history of exposure to puffer fish or non-Florida molluscan shellfish.

Case classification
Confirmed:
A clinically compatible illness in a person with laboratory evidence.

Probable:
A clinically compatible illness in a person with epidemiological criteria.

Suspect:
A clinically compatible illness in a person whose history of exposure to puffer fish or non-Florida molluscan shellfish is unknown.

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

Comments
Contact your Regional Environmental Epidemiologist for information.