

Foodborne Neurotoxic Shellfish Poisoning (NSP)

NSP is found in shellfish that have been contaminated with brevetoxin from the red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*.

Symptoms: Tingling and numbness of lips, tongue and throat, muscle aches and weakness, tingling and numbness in the extremities, dizziness, reversal of the sensations of hot and cold, diarrhea, and vomiting. In severe cases, respiratory distress and more serious neurological effects have been seen.

Onset: A few minutes to as much as 12-18 hours after eating contaminated food.

Duration: A few hours to several days.

Diagnosis: Exhibiting symptoms, confirmed exposure to shellfish from areas where other toxic shellfish have been found, and/or positive results from analysis of implicated food.

Mode of Transmission: Ingestion of shellfish contaminated with brevetoxin.

Common Foods: Most bivalve shellfish are potentially toxic, specifically clams, mussels, and oysters. Some gastropods such as whelks and conchs may be toxic as well.

Prevention and Control:

- Be aware of areas closed to shellfish harvesting in your area.
- Do not collect shellfish from areas where other toxic shellfish have been found.
- Check red tide reports in your area before collecting shellfish.
- Report any illness to your doctor immediately.
- Notify the local health department.
- If you are not sure about an area, do not harvest or consume the shellfish that you picked up yourself. Purchase them from an approved source (licensed seafood market or restaurant).
- To learn about areas open to shellfish harvesting, contact the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Aquaculture. (www.floridaaquaculture.com)

Brevetoxin cannot be removed by cleaning, cooking or freezing. Brevetoxin has no taste, color or smell.

Learn more by going to our website: www.floridashealth.com