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PROVIDENCE - The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) is advising food establishments to check the tags on any shellfish that they sell to consumers or use in food preparation and to avoid using or selling any shellfish harvested from areas in the Town of Oyster Bay, N.Y. The harvesting of shellfish from that area has been temporarily prohibited due to an illness outbreak caused by naturally occurring marine bacteria in shellfish, according to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

A map showing the affected closure areas is available at the DEC website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7765.html>.

The action was taken by DEC and the New York State Department of Health after three people who ate raw or partially cooked shellfish in Nassau County became ill. An additional five illnesses were reported to DEC by three other states that received shellfish harvested in Oyster Bay.

Laboratory tests have determined that the illnesses were caused by the marine bacteria, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, which occurs naturally and is generally associated with warm water conditions. When ingested, the bacteria may cause diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, as well as abdominal cramps, fever and chills. Those with compromised immune systems or underlying chronic diseases are at increased risk for illness.

Consumers who are experiencing these symptoms and have recently consumed raw shellfish should contact their physician.

No illnesses have been reported in Rhode Island.

Shellfish grown and produced in Rhode Island are not affected.

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Related links

Office of Food Protection

Department or agency: Department of Health

Online: <http://www.health.ri.gov>

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