



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Annual Quarantine of Sport-Harvested Mussels Begins May 1

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced the annual quarantine of sport-harvested mussels gathered along the California coast. The quarantine begins May 1 and applies to all species of mussels that are recreationally harvested along the California coast, including all bays and estuaries. The quarantine is in place to protect the public against poisoning that can lead to serious illness, including coma and death.

The quarantine is designed to prevent paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) and domoic acid poisoning in people who might otherwise consume sport-harvested mussels. Both of these toxins are linked to plankton consumed by shellfish, including mussels and clams.

Historically the majority of human cases of PSP illnesses occur between spring and fall. In California, PSP is extremely rare due to the efforts put forth by CDPH to protect the public against poisoning. There have been no reported cases of domoic acid poisoning in California.

Early symptoms of PSP include tingling of the lips and tongue, which may begin within minutes of eating toxic shellfish. These symptoms are typically followed by a loss of balance, lack of muscular coordination, slurred speech and difficulty swallowing. In severe poisonings, complete muscular paralysis and death from asphyxiation can occur.

Commercially harvested shellfish are not included in the annual quarantine because all commercial harvesters in California are certified by CDPH and subject to strict testing requirements to ensure that all oysters, clams and mussels entering the marketplace are free of toxins.

More information about the quarantine, PSP and domoic acid can be found on the [CDPH Annual Mussel Quarantine - Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) Web page](#).

For updated information on quarantines and shellfish toxins, call the CDPH Biotoin Information Line at (800) 553-4133.

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