



Note: From Memorial Day through Labor Day, the Anne Arundel County Department of Health provides water sampling results for more than 70 county beaches. Visit aahealth.org/beach or call 410-222-7999 for more information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 31, 2017

Media Contact:

Elin Jones, Public Information Director, 410-222-4508, hdjones@aacounty.org

Anne Arundel County Department of Health Provides Advice on Water-Associated Health Risks

As warmer weather approaches the area, the Anne Arundel County Department of Health reminds county residents about health risks associated with natural bodies of water and with eating raw shellfish.

Natural bodies of water can contain bacteria, viruses and other microorganisms. Swimmer's ear, an infection of the outer ear, is most common, but other water-related illnesses can be acquired. Disease-causing microorganisms, such as various forms of *Vibrio*, can enter the body through open cuts and sores. Eating raw shellfish can also cause *Vibrio*-related illnesses. Each summer as water use and temperatures rise, cases of *Vibrio*-related illnesses are reported in Anne Arundel County.

People with liver disease or weakened immune systems are at highest risk of serious infection from *Vibrio* bacteria. They should avoid contact with raw shellfish whether in the water or on the plate. Although rare, *Vibrio* can also cause serious infections in healthy people.

The Department of Health offers the following recommendations:

- Cook crabs, oysters, clams, mussels and other shellfish completely.
- Do not swim in natural bodies of water if you have an ear infection, perforated eardrum, open cut, skin lesion or immunity problem.
- Wash well with soap and warm water after coming in contact with natural bodies of water.
- Thoroughly clean any cuts or wounds you sustain during water activities. Boaters may want to carry hand sanitizers and first aid supplies in case of cuts and scrapes, especially those related to handling seafood.
- If an infection develops in a wound, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Answers to commonly asked questions about natural water bodies, health risks and water-related illnesses, including *Vibrio* and *Mycobacterium marinum*, are at aahealth.org. Go to "Topics A-Z" and select "Water Quality, Health Risks, and Swimming or Fishing in Anne Arundel County Rivers and Creeks."

###