



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**CDPH Warns Consumers Not to Eat Viscera of Lobster Caught
in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties**

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is advising consumers not to eat the viscera (internal organs) of lobsters caught near Santa Cruz Island in Santa Barbara County, and Anacapa Island in Ventura County, due to the detection of dangerous levels of domoic acid, a naturally occurring toxin.

While domoic acid levels may vary, consumers should always follow these best preparation practices to avoid any inadvertent exposure to domoic acid that might be sporadically found in the lobster's viscera. When whole lobsters are cooked in liquid, domoic acid may leach from the viscera into the cooking liquid. Water or broth used to cook whole lobsters should be discarded and not used to prepare dishes such as sauces, broths, soups or stews (for example, cioppino or gumbo), stocks, roux, dressings or dips. Cooking lobsters neither decreases nor destroys the toxin in the viscera or body meat. The viscera usually contain much higher levels of domoic acid than the meat, and people are advised to discard the viscera.

Symptoms of domoic acid poisoning can occur within 30 minutes to 24 hours after eating toxic seafood. In mild cases, symptoms may include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache and dizziness. These symptoms disappear within several days. In severe cases, the victim may experience trouble breathing, confusion, cardiovascular instability, seizures, excessive bronchial secretions, permanent loss of short-term memory, coma or death.

CDPH continues to coordinate its efforts with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the fishing community to collect and test lobster samples from the impacted areas until domoic acid levels have dissipated.

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in consultation with CDPH, has recommended a closure of the commercial lobster fishery around Anacapa Island in Ventura County and the eastern part of Santa Cruz Island in Santa Barbara County. More information is available on the [CDFW](#) website.

To receive updated information about shellfish poisoning and quarantines, call CDPH's toll-free "Shellfish Information Line" at (800) 553-4133. For additional information visit [CDPH's Domoic Acid webpage](#).

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