

MEDIA/PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 1, 2015

Shellfish Harvesting Closure Expanded

Port Washington, Sinclair Inlet, and Rich Passage added to the all shellfish species closure area

KITSAP COUNTY, WA—The Kitsap Public Health District and the Washington State Department of Health have closed shellfish harvesting in Port Washington Narrows, Sinclair Inlet, and Rich Passage due to high levels of marine biotoxins that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP).

Samples of shellfish collected on August 31st from the affected areas in Bremerton and Port Orchard had PSP concentrations ranging up to 170 micrograms per 100 grams of shellfish tissue. Shorelines are closed to harvesting when PSP toxin levels exceed 80 micrograms per 100 grams of tissue. Warning signs have been posted at public beaches alerting people not to collect shellfish from the closure areas. Existing shellfish closures remain in effect. All Kitsap County shellfish harvesting closures are listed on the Kitsap Public Health District [Shellfish Harvesting Advisory webpage](#).

This closure is for all of Port Washington Narrows, Sinclair Inlet, and all of Rich Passage to Orchard Rocks near Manchester and includes all recreational shellfish harvesting for all species of clams, oysters, and mussels. Shrimp and crab are not included in this closure, but crabs should be cleaned prior to cooking and the “crab butter” should be discarded. Shellfish harvested commercially that are available in stores and restaurants are tested for toxins prior to distribution and are safe to eat.

It is very important that anyone planning to harvest or consume local, recreationally-harvested shellfish check the status of shellfish harvesting before consuming any shellfish.

Kitsap Public Health Resources:

- Kitsap Public Health Shellfish Hotline: 1-800-2BE-WELL (1-800-223-9355)
- [Kitsap Public Health Shellfish Advisory webpage](http://www.kitsappublichealth.org/shellfish) (www.kitsappublichealth.org/shellfish)
- [Sign-up](#) for shellfish harvesting and other Kitsap Public Health updates via email or text message.

- Follow Kitsap Public Health on [Facebook](#).

The Washington State Department of Health/Other Resources:

- Statewide Shellfish Safety Hotline: 1-800-562-5632
- [Shellfish safety clickable map](#)
- [Marine biotoxins closure list \(by county\)](#)
- [Shellfish species identification chart](#)
- [Safe shellfish practices](#)
- [Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife recreational shellfish website](#)

About Shellfish Biotoxins

Marine biotoxins are not destroyed by cooking or freezing and can be life-threatening. People can become ill from eating shellfish contaminated with the naturally occurring marine algae that contains toxins that are harmful to humans. In most cases, the algae that contain the biotoxins cannot be seen and must be detected using laboratory testing. Kitsap Public Health monitors shellfish at Kitsap County beaches, and works to notify public if the levels biotoxins become unsafe in other areas.

[Paralytic Shellfish Poison \(PSP\)](#), [Diarrhetic Shellfish Poison \(DSP\)](#) and [Amnesic Shellfish Poison \(ASP\)](#) are the [marine biotoxins](#) commonly found in Washington's marine waters. PSP closures are most common in Kitsap County. Symptoms of PSP can appear within minutes or hours and usually begin with tingling lips and tongue, moving to the hands and feet, followed by difficulty breathing and potentially death. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should contact a health care provider. For extreme reactions, call 911.

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