

## Shellfish toxins confirmed along the Bay of Plenty coastline

As a result of testing, people are advised to avoid collecting or eating shellfish from a large area along the Coromandel and Bay of Plenty coastline.

The area includes the entire coastline from Tairua (including Tairua Harbour) south including Whiritoa, Whangamata, Onemana, and east along the Bay of Plenty coastline from Waihi beach, including Tauranga Harbour to the mouth of the Whakatane River in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Included are all inshore islands within the above area. The coastline eastward from Ohope beach is currently unaffected.

“Sampling confirms high levels of paralytic shellfish poison along this stretch of coast. The levels of toxin are particularly high and we strongly urge people to avoid all shellfish from this area until further notice,” says Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service, Medical Officer of Health, Dr Phil Shoemack.

The health warning affects **all** bi-valve shellfish including mussels, pipi, tuatua, cockles, oysters, scallops, catseyes and kina (sea urchin). Paua, crayfish and crabs can still be taken but as always, the gut should be removed before cooking.

Consumption of shellfish affected by the paralytic shellfish toxin can cause numbness and tingling around the mouth, face or extremities; difficulty swallowing or breathing; dizziness; double vision; and in severe cases, paralysis and respiratory failure. These symptoms usually occur within 12 hours of a person consuming affected shellfish.

Anyone suffering illness after eating shellfish should seek medical attention. Monitoring of toxin levels will continue over the holiday period and any changes will be communicated accordingly.

For all health warning updates across the Bay of Plenty and Lakes districts call 0800 221 555. Further information is available at [www.toiteorapublichealth.govt.nz](http://www.toiteorapublichealth.govt.nz).

### ENDS

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