This month’s ePostcard regards changes to Vibrio case investigation and followup. Vibrio will be treated as an immediate disease from May 19th-October 19th. This change will result in you receiving email notifications to let you know your LBOH has one of these cases in your immediate workflow in MAVEN. Additional changes have also been made to the risk history question package for Vibrio events and a new question package called “Traceback” has been added which will be used by the MDPH Food Protection Program.

We plan to have a Vibrio webinar June, 11th from 10:30-11:30 a.m. to review these changes with everyone but wanted to make you aware that these changes have been implemented today -- May 19th. To register for the webinar please follow the link: https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/693092689.

But first a little about Vibrio parahaemolyticus (click on hyperlink for a fact sheet):

What is Vibrio parahaemolyticus?
V. parahaemolyticus is a germ (a bacterium) in the same family as the bacteria that cause cholera. It naturally lives in coastal waters in the United States and causes an infection of the bowel in humans.

What are the symptoms of V. parahaemolyticus infection?
A person may have watery diarrhea, often with stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and chills. Symptoms usually appear within 24 hours of swallowing the germs. Illness usually lasts for three days. People with weakened immune systems or chronic liver disease are at a higher risk of becoming ill.

How does infection with V. parahaemolyticus occur?
V. parahaemolyticus must be swallowed to cause illness in most cases. This usually happens by eating food or drinking water that is contaminated with the germs. Most people become infected by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters. Illness can also occur by eating undercooked crab and shrimp. Less commonly, this germ can cause an infection in the skin when an open wound is exposed to warm seawater. It is not spread from person to person.
How is *V. parahaemolyticus* infection diagnosed and treated?

Your doctor, nurse, or health center must send a stool, wound, or blood sample to a laboratory. Other than drinking plenty of liquids to replace fluids lost through diarrhea, treatment is not necessary in most cases of *V. parahaemolyticus* infection. There is no evidence that antibiotics decrease the severity or length of the illness. People usually recover on their own in two to five days.

How can *V. parahaemolyticus* infection be prevented?

Most infections caused by *V. parahaemolyticus* in the United States can be prevented by thoroughly cooking seafood. When an outbreak is traced back to an oyster or other shellfish bed, health officials may close the bed until the salt and temperature conditions are less favorable for this germ to thrive. People should not consume oysters self-harvested from closed or contaminated oyster or other shellfish beds.
Vibrio case investigation and steps for LBOH and MDPH Epidemiologists:

1. Epi-of-the-day (EOD) acknowledges case in MAVEN.
2. If case is a *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp):
   - EOD calls LBOH, makes note that LBOH was contacted in MAVEN
   - EOD enters note into event with directions on next steps for case investigation and followup for your Vp case.
3. LBOH initiates case investigation by completing Steps 1-3 in Admin QP.
4. LBOH starts investigation by calling case within 24 hours and then completes all questions in MAVEN QPs (excluding Traceback). LBOH finishes case investigation and completes Steps 4-5 in Admin QP.
5. EOD reviews case once investigation is completed.
6. Case is assigned to the Food Protection Program/Vibrio Control Manager for Traceback Question Package followup and case investigation if appropriate.
7. Traceback Question Package is completed by Food Protection Program. LBOH can see and review the Traceback QKPG but not edit. Usually when the LBOH completes their case investigation there will be no information in the Traceback OKPG to see.
8. MDPH Foodborne Team reviews case and extracts data to send to CDC and FDA.

**Please note:** A non Vp case (for example, a case of *Vibrio alginolyticus*) should be treated as a routine event. In these events, you will see a note from an MDPH Epidemiologist stating that this event is not *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and does not require immediate follow-up. Please complete as a routine investigation.
Example of new variables in the Risk/Exposure/Control & Prevention Question Package:

- MDPH added time consumed, amount consumed, was it harvested by the case or a friend of the case.
- Retired questions that were no longer used by MDPH or Food Protection Program.
Example of the new Traceback Question Package:

![Traceback Question Package](image)

**Sample Traceback Question Package Answered by FPP/Vibrio Control Manager**

**Additional Vibrio References (click on links to open):**
1. *Notes from the Field: Increase in *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* Infections Associated with Consumption of Atlantic Coast Shellfish — 2013*
2. *Food Protection Program - Vibrio Control Program Website*

If you have questions, please email isishelp@state.ma.us or contact the MAVEN help desk at 617-983-6801.