



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recreational Shellfish Biotoxin Closure Lifted; All Whatcom Beaches Open

BELLINGHAM, WA — The biotoxin closure for Bellingham Bay south to the Skagit County border has been lifted. Recent shellfish samples show that Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning biotoxin levels recently dropped, and there are currently no biotoxin closures in effect for Whatcom County.

Biotoxin levels can change rapidly, so shellfish harvesters are advised to always check for current shellfish closures at the Washington Shellfish Safety Map (<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/maps/biotoxin/biotoxin.html>) or to call the DOH Biotoxin Hotline at 1-800-562-5632 before harvesting shellfish anywhere in Washington State. Algae that produce marine biotoxins cannot be seen and must be detected by laboratory testing.

Biotoxins are not destroyed by cooking or freezing. Shellfish sold in restaurants and retail markets are tested before distribution and are safe to eat.

The Whatcom County Health Department routinely collects shellfish samples to monitor local biotoxin levels in coordination with the Washington State Department of Health. More information about marine biotoxins and shellfish consumption is available at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Shellfish/RecreationalShellfish/Innaces/Biotoxins>.

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