Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) Toxin Concentrations in Kodiak Butter Clams

Note: Collection dates with no data reflect missed collection and not zero values.

Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) is a serious health risk when consuming personally harvested shellfish. PSP levels were typically above regulatory limit during the project monitoring period. The regulatory limit for safe consumption is 80 micrograms (μg) toxin /100 grams (g) shellfish. Toxin concentrations in Kodiak Butter Clams are shown in the graphs below.

Note: Collection dates with no data reflect missed collection and not zero values.

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Old Harbor: Shipwreck Beach

Ouzinkie: Sourdough Beach

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As part of an Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) funded statewide recreational beach monitoring project, the Kodiak Island Borough School District, in partnership with Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program and the communities of Ouzinkie and Old Harbor, have been sampling butter clams from designated beaches to determine Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) toxin concentrations. The project was not designed to certify a beach as safe, but rather to collect information on toxin trends in the region in efforts to develop a safe harvest program. The regulatory limit for safe consumption is 80 micrograms (μg) toxin /100 grams (g) shellfish. Toxin concentrations were typically above regulatory limit during the project monitoring period.

PSP is a serious health risk when consuming personally harvested shellfish. PSP levels are sporadic and variable by beach and by bivalve species. Extreme caution should be taken when consuming filter-feeding shellfish (clams, scallops, and mussels) from Alaska Beaches. Crabs can also accumulate toxins in their digestive system, and it is advised to remove the dark tissues that comprise the digestive tissue and crab butter before cooking. Know the symptoms of PSP and seek medical attention immediately if symptoms are suspected.

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