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Government of India

Media Scanning & Verification Cell

Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
3698	03/10/2016	06/10/2016	Dakshina Kannada	www.outbreaknewstoday.com/English http://outbreaknewstoday.com/india-reports-first-ciguatera-poisoning-outbreak-more-than-100-affected-42568/
Title:	**First ciguatera poisoning outbreak, more than 100 affected in district Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka**			
Action By CSU, IDSP –NCDC	Information communicated to DSU- **Dakshina Kannada**, SSU-**Karnataka**			

For the first time on the Indian subcontinent, an outbreak of ciguatera was reported in Mangaluru, where more than 100 people were sickened Saturday after consuming fish heads.

Biologists in India warn that the risk of additional outbreaks stems from a number of factors such as climate change, ocean acidification resulting in coral reef deterioration, nutrient run-off resulting in toxic algal blooms.

More than 400 species of fish, including barracuda, black grouper, blackfin snapper, cubera snapper, dog snapper, greater amberjack, hogfish, horse-eye jack, king mackerel, and yellowfin grouper have been implicated in this food borne illness that's relatively common in several areas of the world to the tune of 50,000 cases annually.

This toxin is the result of the accumulation of marine algae and the toxins they produce passing up the food chain. These marine algae hang on to dead coral and seaweed. They are then eaten by herbivore fish which are subsequently eaten by predatory reef fish which concentrates the toxin in its tissue. People get this food borne toxin from eating these contaminated larger fish. The reef fishes are more likely to get contaminated during storms and other turbulence.

Save Water- Save Life, Save a tree- Don't print unless it's really necessary!

Disclaimer:- This is a media alert subject to verification.

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After eating the affected fish (the fish does not get sick from the toxin and actually tastes good) in as little as a couple of hours symptoms may appear.Gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea, nausea and vomiting tend to appear early. Then a feeling of weakness and hypertension may occur in addition to complaints of intense itching.

Some mild to severe neurological symptoms are common with ciguatera; dizziness, impaired coordination, blurred vision and even coma may be seen in severe cases. An unusual characteristic that is common in ciguatera is temperature reversal. This may be seen from 2 to 5 days after eating the fish. Hot objects seem cold and cold objects can give a shock-like sensation. There have been serious injuries because a person was unable to recognize extremely hot sensations. Other odd symptoms are food may taste metallic and teeth may seem painful or loose.

The gastrointestinal symptoms usually resolve in a couple days; however neurological symptoms may last for months or years. Symptoms may come back after ingesting certain foods and drinks; alcohol, caffeine, nuts and fish.

There are no laboratory tests to diagnose this disease and it's based on clinical symptoms and a history of eating an offending fish. Some studies have shown that IV mannitol is effective in providing relief and recovery if taken within the first 72 hours of intoxication. Other than that most treatment is for the various symptoms the person may have.

So how can you prevent getting this potentially serious toxin? Prevention can be difficult since the toxin in the fish cannot be killed by cooking and there is no offensive odor or appearance to the fish. So the only way to truly try to prevent this intoxication is to avoid eating large reef fish or getting your fish through a reputable supplier.

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