

FACT SHEET

Vibrio

Common clinical features

Vibrio species are uncommon causes of infectious intestinal disease in the UK. One species, *Vibrio cholerae* is the cause of cholera, a severe diarrhoeal disease. *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* is the most common species causing food poisoning in the UK. This causes watery diarrhoea and abdominal cramps in the majority of cases, occasionally with nausea, vomiting fever and headache. Occasionally a dysentery like illness is seen with blood and mucus in the stools and a high fever. More commonly it is a disease of moderate severity lasting 1-7 days.

Incubation period

Usually 12-24 hours.

Where is it found?

In fish or shellfish.

How is it acquired by affected individuals?

By eating raw or inadequately cooked seafood.

How does the laboratory confirm the diagnosis?

The bacteria can be cultured from faeces on selective media. Results are usually available within 2 or 3 days. The tests will be carried out only if the history and symptoms strongly suggest infection with Vibrio.

How is it treated?

Symptomatic treatment and rehydration with antibiotics for the more severe cases.