KITSAP PUBLIC
HEALTH DISTRICT

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 20, 2015

Shellfish harvesting closed in Liberty Bay

All shellfish species included in closure due to biotoxin concentrations

KITSAP COUNTY, WA—The Kitsap Public Health District and the Washington State Department of Health have closed shellfish harvesting in Liberty Bay due to high levels of marine biotoxins that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP).

Samples of shellfish collected on July 18 contained PSP concentrations of 87 micrograms per 100 grams of shellfish tissue. Shorelines are closed to harvesting when PSP toxin levels exceed 80 micrograms per 100 grams of tissue. Warning signs have been posted at public beaches alerting people not to collect shellfish from the closure areas. Existing shellfish closures remain in effect. All Kitsap County shellfish harvesting closures are listed on the Kitsap Public Health District Shellfish Harvesting Advisory webpage.

There are ongoing recreational shellfish harvesting closures for portions of Dyes Inlet. This closure is for all of Dyes Inlet and includes all recreational shellfish harvesting for all species of clams, oysters, and mussels. Shrimp and crab are not included in this closure, but crabs should be cleaned prior to cooking, and the "crab butter" should be discarded. Shellfish harvested commercially that are available in stores and restaurants are tested for toxins prior to distribution, and are safe to eat.

It is very important that anyone planning to harvest or consume local, recreationally harvested shellfish check the status of shellfish harvesting before consuming any shellfish.

Kitsap Public Health Resources:

- Kitsap Public Health Shellfish Hotline: 1-800-2BE-WELL (1-800-223-9355)
- Kitsap Public Health Shellfish Advisory webpage (www.kitsappublichealth.org/shellfish)
- Sign-up for shellfish harvesting and other Kitsap Public Health updates via email or text message.
- Follow Kitsap Public Health on Facebook.

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The Washington State Department of Health/Other Resources:

- Statewide Shellfish Safety Hotline: 1-800-562-5632
- Shellfish safety clickable map
- Marine biotoxins closure list (by county)
- Shellfish species identification chart
- Safe shellfish practices
- Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife recreational shellfish website

About Shellfish Biotoxins

Marine biotoxins are not destroyed by cooking or freezing and can be life-threatening. People can become ill from eating shellfish contaminated with the naturally occurring marine algae that contains toxins that are harmful to humans. In most cases, the algae that contain the biotoxins cannot be seen and must be detected using laboratory testing. Kitsap Public Health monitors shellfish at Kitsap County beaches, and works to notify public if the levels biotoxins become unsafe in other areas.

Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP), Diarrhetic Shellfish Poison (DSP) and Amnesic Shellfish Poison (ASP) are the marine biotoxins commonly found in Washington's marine waters. PSP closures are most common in Kitsap County. Symptoms of PSP can appear within minutes or hours and usually begin with tingling lips and tongue, moving to the hands and feet, followed by difficulty breathing and potentially death. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should contact a health care provider. For extreme reactions, call 911.

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For more information, please contact:

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