Warning to Consumers About Mussels

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued an annual quarantine of all sport-harvested mussel species along the California coast beginning on May 1, 2012. The quarantine is in place to protect the public against poisoning as the toxins found in mussels can lead to severe illness and death.

Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) and domoic acid poisoning (DAP) are both linked to microscopic plankton that are concentrated in filter-feeding animals. PSP affects the human central nervous system producing a tingling around the moth and fingertips within a few minutes to a few hours after eating toxic shellfish. DAP can occur within 30 minutes to 24 hours after eating toxic seafood. More information about the quarantine, PSP and DAP can be found on the Mussel Quarantine Frequently Asked Questions web page at the California Department of Public Health.

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/MusselQuarantineFAQ.aspx

This warning does not apply to commercially sold clams, mussels, scallops or oysters. State law only permits state-certified commercial shellfish harvesters or dealers to sell these products. Shellfish sold by certified harvesters and dealers are subject to frequent mandatory testing.

The quarantine usually lasts from May 1 through October 31.

To receive updated information about shellfish poisoning and quarantines, call CDPH toll-free “Shellfish Information Line” at (800) 553-4133. You may also receive additional information from the California Department of Public Health at www.cdph.ca.gov

###