



Mississippi State Department of Health
570 East Woodrow Wilson - Box 1700 - Jackson, MS 39215-1700

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

July 10, 2013

The Mississippi State Department of Health Reports New Cases of Rare Disease

The Mississippi State Department of Health is confirming three newly diagnosed cases of Haff disease, a rare but serious illness caused by an unidentified toxin in buffalo fish that can cause a condition called rhabdomyolysis. Rhabdomyolysis is a muscle injury syndrome that causes pain, stiffness and rarely, kidney damage.

The three Mississippi cases are members of one family and are linked to the consumption of cooked buffalo fish harvested in Mississippi waters.

While these are Mississippi's first recorded cases, Haff disease has previously been associated with the consumption of buffalo fish in the United States. Since 1984, approximately 30 sporadic cases have been reported. Most cases occur in the summer months. So far, there have been no reported deaths linked to the disease in Mississippi or the U.S.

Symptoms, which typically occur within 12 hours of consuming the fish, include muscle weakness and pain, dry mouth, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and dark urine. Intravenous fluids and other treatments can help resolve symptoms. Severe symptoms typically resolve quickly although some patients complain of fatigue for months following acute stages of the illness.

The Mississippi State Department of Health is advising the public that the consumption of buffalo fish has been associated with a small number of Haff disease cases. Cooking buffalo fish does not reduce the risk of disease. Many Mississippians consume buffalo fish on a routine basis without illness. However, individuals who develop the above symptoms after the consumption of buffalo fish harvested in Mississippi or nearby waters (either caught or purchased at a retail establishment or restaurant) should seek immediate medical care.

Visit www.HealthyMS.com. Find us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/HealthyMS or follow us on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/msdh.

CONTACT: Office of Communications, 601-576-7667

Note to media: After hours or during emergencies, call 1-866-HLTHY4U (1-866-458-4948)

Online: HealthyMS.com facebook.com/HealthyMS twitter.com/msdh