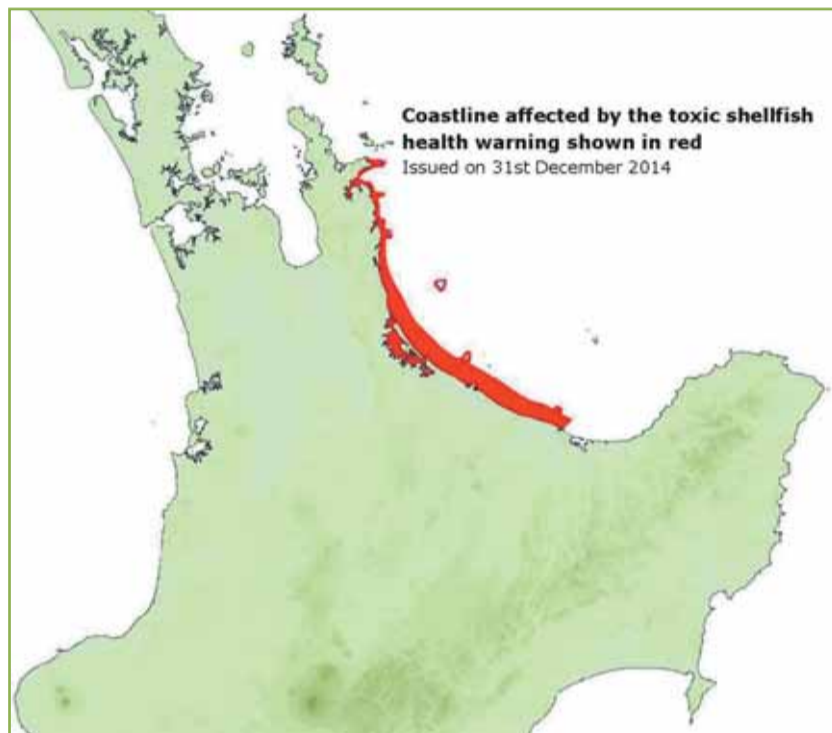


## Toxic shellfish unsafe to eat from the Bay of Plenty coastline

Summer is a great time to relax and enjoy the Bay of Plenty's beaches, but unfortunately locals and visitors to parts of the region will not be able to enjoy one favourite water activity this year – shellfish collecting.



Since late November 2014 high levels of paralytic shellfish poison have been found in shellfish along a significant stretch of our coastline. A health warning is therefore in place advising against the collection of shellfish from Whakatane Heads in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, all the way along the coast to Waihi Beach, and up the eastern side of the Coromandel Peninsula to Opito Bay north of Whitianga. All harbours, estuaries and islands along this coastline are included in the warning.

“Ongoing monitoring confirms continuing high levels of paralytic shellfish poison in shellfish along this coast. People should avoid collecting shellfish in these areas,” says Medical Officer of Health, Dr Phil Shoemack.

The health warning applies to all bivalve shellfish including mussels, pipi, tuatua, cockles, oysters, scallops as well as cat's eyes, snails and kina (sea urchin).

Paralytic shellfish poisoning is caused by natural toxins that are produced by algal blooms and accumulate in shellfish that feed on the algae. Shellfish containing toxic levels of paralytic shellfish poison

don't look or taste any different from shellfish that are safe to eat. Cooking or freezing the shellfish does not remove the toxin. Paua, crayfish and crabs can still be taken but as always, the gut should be removed before cooking or eating.

Eating shellfish affected by paralytic shellfish toxin can cause numbness and tingling around the mouth, face, hands and feet; difficulty swallowing or breathing; dizziness; double vision; and in severe cases, paralysis and respiratory failure. These symptoms can start as soon as 1-2 hours after eating toxic shellfish and usually within 12 hours. Anyone suffering illness after eating shellfish should seek urgent medical attention.

The public can obtain up-to-date information on the toxic shellfish health warning through these channels:

- **Phone:** 0800 221 555
- **Websites:** [www.ttophs.govt.nz/health\\_warnings](http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/health_warnings) and [www.twitter.com/ttophs](http://www.twitter.com/ttophs)
- **Email alerts for subscribers:** [www.ttophs.govt.nz/alert](http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/alert)
- **Signage at locations.**

## Immunise on time every time

Immunisation for babies and children is free from GPs in New Zealand.

It's important to immunise on time, every time, starting at 6 weeks of age, to give babies and children the best protection from serious illness and disease.

Immunisation in New Zealand is recommended at 6 weeks, 3 months, 5 months, 15 months, 4 years, 11 years and 12 years (girls only). If you think your child might have missed one or more of their immunisations, talk to your GP or practice nurse. You can usually catch up.

If your child is sick when the immunisation is due, check with your GP or practice nurse if it can still happen.

Immunisation is the most effective way to actively protect your family from 12 serious preventable diseases, such as whooping cough, tetanus and measles - diseases that can kill.

Give your child the best protection possible against preventable disease and immunise. Talk to your GP or practice nurse today.

No question is too silly.

Free phone line

0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863)

Talk to health professionals at the Immunisation Advisory Centre, part of Auckland University.



As a dad it's your obligation to look after your children. Get them immunised.  
Matua Parkinson,  
father, Māori All Black,  
TV Presenter.

Be wise immunise

0800immune

[www.immune.org.nz](http://www.immune.org.nz)

## New app to check symptoms

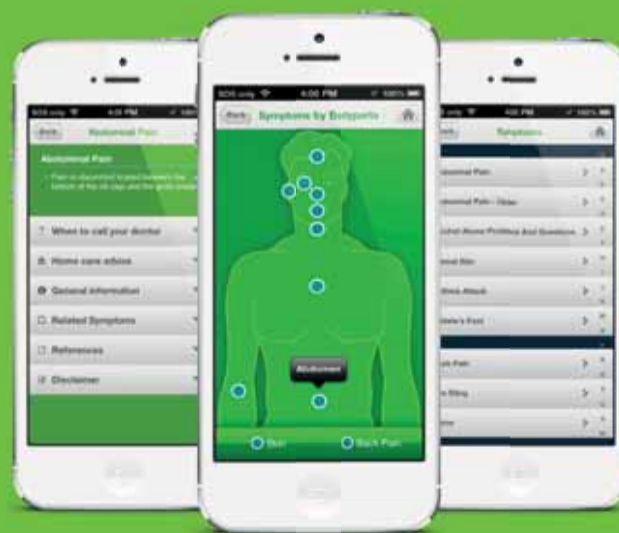
Move over Dr Google! You can now check symptoms when you download New Zealand's free Healthline Symptom Checker app for your iPhone or iPad.

The Healthline Symptom Checker lets you enter your symptoms on a body map or search by name from a list e.g. knee injury. Once the symptoms have been found, courses of action

see the doctor within 24 hours, or advice on how to manage the condition at home.

The app can also store health providers' contact details and some emergency numbers.

Health advice you can trust in your pocket



Healthline  
Symptom Checker

Download the free Healthline App for iPhone or iPad  
[www.healthline.govt.nz](http://www.healthline.govt.nz)

FREE 24 hour health advice – 0800 611 116

The Healthline Symptom Checker complements the Healthline telephone service and gives people a new way to access health information and advice.

*It is important to note the information provided through the app is not a substitute for health advice, diagnosis or treatment given by a doctor or nurse.*



## Be safe - be SunSmart!

Sunburn and skin damage is caused by UV rays from the sun and it can lead to skin cancer. This is especially important if you are swimming or near water as the sun's rays are reflected onto you. So everyone needs to cover-up, especially your children.

"Firstly, if it's possible, try to stay out of direct sun during the hours of 10am to 4pm. This is when the sun can do the most damage. Look for natural shade or create your own with an umbrella, tent or other shelter. Then it's important to Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap," says Dr Phil Shoemack, Medical Officer of Health.

**SLIP** into a long-sleeved shirt and into the shade. Generally, fabrics with a tighter weave and darker colours will give you greater protection from the sun. There are also certain fabrics on the market that have a SPF rating.

**SLOP** on plenty of broad-spectrum SPF30+ sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outdoors.

**SLAP** on a hat with a wide-brim or a cap with flaps - more people get

sunburned on their face and neck than any other part of the body.

**WRAP** on a pair of wrap-around sunglasses - UV radiation is just as dangerous to eyesight as it is for the skin.

Take these precautions especially between 10 am and 4 pm (September to April).

**For more information about being SunSmart for you and your family visit, [www.sunsmart.org.nz](http://www.sunsmart.org.nz)**



## Taking the barb out of the barbeque this summer

What better way to enjoy summer than to eat outdoors? Before you slap those sausages on the barbeque and whip up a salad - take a minute to ensure you, your friends and family will be safe from the misery of food poisoning.

Every year lots of New Zealanders get foodborne illnesses and many are caused by unsafe food handling practices in the home.

"Whether you go on a picnic, barbeque or camping trip - you'll be taking your food out of the fridge or freezer. As soon as the temperature of the food begins to rise, bacteria in the food can multiply and this could be a risk," says Medical Officer of Health, Dr Phil Shoemack. "Unless perishable food is handled properly, it can cause problems so keep hot food HOT and cold food COLD - or don't keep it at all."

Cleaned the barbeque since last summer? A dirty barbeque is a haven for pests which love to spread bacteria so make sure it has been cleaned before you use it. Ensure utensils are clean and hands are washed thoroughly (wash for 20 seconds, dry for 20 seconds) before and after preparing food.

"Cross contamination from raw to cooked foods

is one of the biggest risks," says Dr Shoemack. "Be careful with knives, cutting boards and hands - clean them thoroughly when moving from raw to cooked foods." Preferably use different chopping boards for meat and other food.

The golden rule for barbeques is that perishable foods should always be refrigerated until needed, which means removing food from the fridge or chilly bin only when you are ready to cook it on the barbeque. Also remember to ensure food is not packed into a chilly bin while it's still warm - food cannot cool quickly enough in a chilly bin to prevent bacteria growing.

"When cooking, always make sure chicken, pork, sausages and minced products like hamburger patties are cooked until the juices run clear - there should be no hint of pink. It can be better to pre-cook these foods," he says. "When taking foods off the barbeque, put them on a clean plate, not the plate which held the raw meat."

**It's simple - Clean, Cook, Cover, Chill.**

**For more information visit [www.foodsmart.govt.nz](http://www.foodsmart.govt.nz)**

## After hours medical care - it's different here!

After hours medical care; that is outside normal working hours between 5pm to 8am Monday to Friday and during weekends and public holidays, is different in the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

If you live in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and have an illness or injury which requires after hours medical care and you are registered with a GP (general practitioner), call your GP's clinic first and a registered nurse will answer the phone and tell you where to go for treatment.

If you are a visitor to the area you will not be registered with a local GP, so please call 07 306 2360 at any hour for medical advice and information about local health resources.

This may include self-care advice, advice from a pharmacist or a recommended visit to the Whakatane Hospital's Emergency Department.

**Remember: Always dial 111 in the event of an emergency or life threatening condition**

If you live in or are visiting Te Kaha and you have an illness or injury after hours you need to call 07 315 8500.

Your call will be answered at the Opotiki Health Centre and a local clinician will be paged or an ambulance arranged to attend to you.

### EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY MEDICAL CLINICS

Church Street Surgery  
**Opotiki** 07 315 6307

Kawerau Medical Centre  
**Kawerau** 07 323 6249

Kopeopeo Health Centre  
**Whakatane** 07 308 5771

Ohope Beach Medical Centre  
**Ohope** 07 312 5340

Phoenix Health Centre  
**Whakatane** 07 307 0586

Total Health Doctors  
**Whakatane** 07 308 8267

Riverslea Medical Centre  
**Edgecumbe** 07 304 9106

Tarawera Medical Centre  
**Kawerau** 07 323 8499

Toi Ora Health Centre  
**Opotiki** 07 315 7900

Med Central, **Kopeopeo** 07 308 5409

Whakatohea Health Centre  
**Opotiki** 07 315 6126