

# Avoid the dangers of toxins and bacteria in fish spines and slime

## For Any Catch

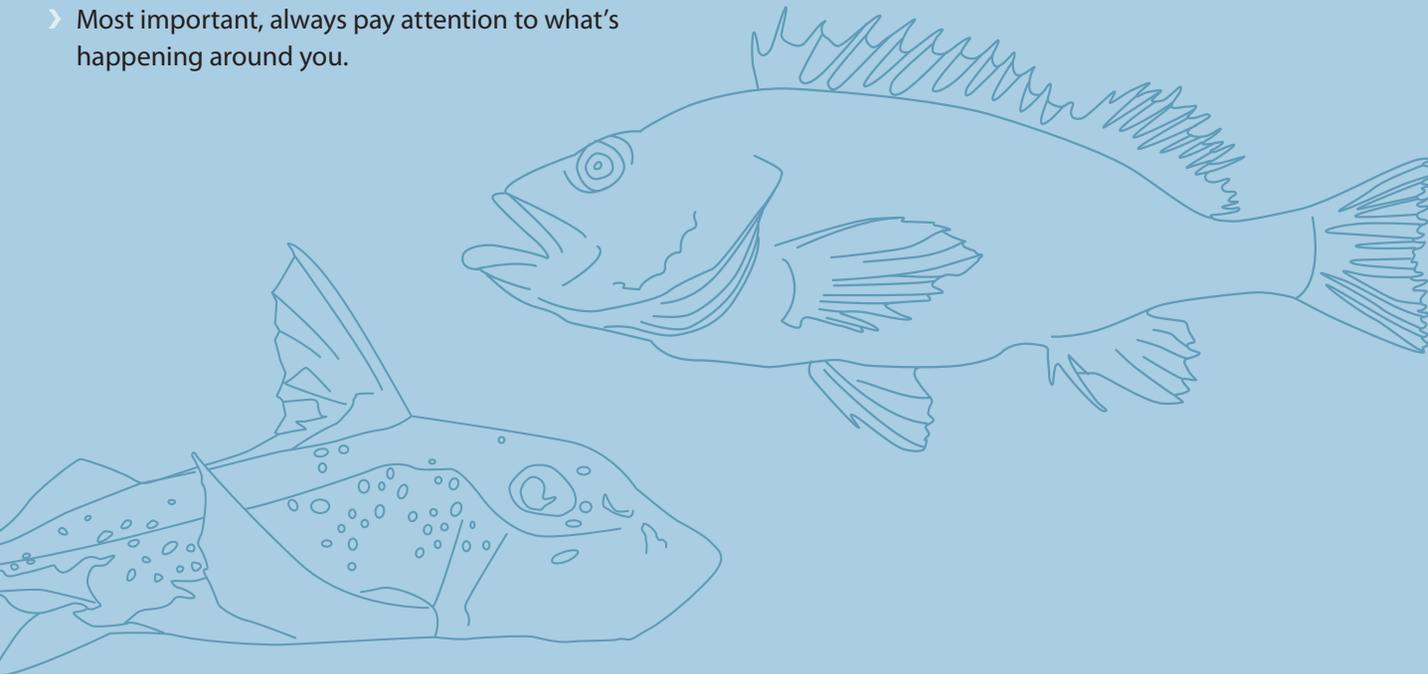
- › Wear the right personal protective equipment for the job — durable gloves, steel-toed boots, hard hat, rain suit and safety glasses to protect your eyes from flying bits of spines.
- › Use clean, dry gloves that are in good shape, and change them often so your hands stay dry. Throw away torn gloves, especially if you already have a wound that could become infected.
- › Wash slimy, bloody gloves in soap or antiseptic — or you'll risk infection the next time you wear them.
- › Beware of slippery surfaces when you move across rafted vessels waiting to unload.
- › Most important, always pay attention to what's happening around you.

## Fin Fish Harvesting

- › Keep an eye out for unexpected spiny by-catch.
- › Wear appropriate gloves when removing spiny fish from fishing gear like nets and hooks.
- › Don't kick fish into hatches because spiny fish may be hidden in the catch.
- › When fleecing nets through the power block, always wear a hard hat.
- › Stand back when spilling the cod end to avoid contact with fish spines.
- › Handle spiny by-catch carefully to avoid accidental contacts.

## Seafood Harvesting

- › **Divers** (whose hands and knees most often suffer spine injuries)
  - › Wear flexible gloves that spines can't puncture, and check your gloves often to ensure they're not damaged.
  - › Only use rakes long enough or with appropriate guarding to protect your hands.
  - › Ensure adequate knee padding.
  - › Always wear commercial, heavy-duty dive suit boots with adequate padding on top.
- › **Tenders**
  - › Wear steel-toed gumboots and durable raingear that's reinforced at the knees.
  - › Never try to stop a bag from swinging.
  - › When shifting or moving bags, wear solid, durable gloves to prevent spine punctures.
- › **Unloading**
  - › Before unloading, discuss the work with the crew so everyone knows what's happening.
  - › Waiting to unload, never wear flip flops or sandals — and never when actually unloading.
  - › Always stand clear to avoid getting hit when the urchin bag is lifted or swinging, or urchins are falling. Never try to stop a swinging bag.
  - › Never forget good gloves, thick, durable puncture-resistant clothes and a hard hat.



## If a spine stabs you

### Start first aid right away

- › Rinse the wound with soap and water.
- › Soak the wound in tolerably hot (40-45°C) water to relieve pain.
- › Continue soaking for 30 to 90 minutes, or longer if the pain continues.
- › Never apply a tourniquet or pressure to the wound.
- › Remove any visible spines.
- › If the fragile spines break and leave fragments in tissue, don't try to dig them out. Keep the wound clean, and get medical attention as soon as possible. A doctor may use x-rays to find the fragments and then remove them.
- › Purple dye released by urchin spines may fool you into thinking spines are embedded under the skin. This dye is not toxic and will be absorbed in a few days.
- › Tell the doctor about your tetanus immunization history, and consider a booster shot.

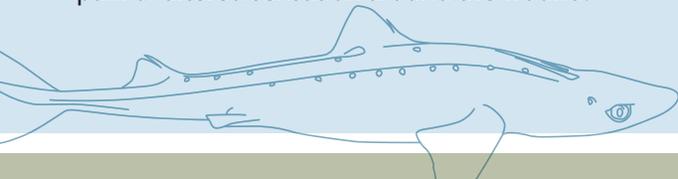
### When is it a medical emergency?

Radio for help immediately if:

- › The injured person is in shock.

Seek medical attention if:

- › A spine punctures a joint space between bones.
- › Signs of infection appear — fever, redness or discolouration, warmth, swelling, pus, increasing pain or altered sensation around the wound.



## More on fishing safety

### WorkSafeBC

#### Occupational Safety Officers

Richmond: Bruce Logan	604 244-6477
Terrace: Shane Neifer	250 615-6640
Courtenay:	
Pat Olsen	250 334-8777
Mark Lunny	250 334-8732
Victoria: David Clarabut	250 881-3469
Industry Specialist Ellen Hanson	604 233-4008

[www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)

(click on "Safety at Work" to find commercial fishing)

### WorkSafeBC Prevention Line:

In the Lower Mainland	604 276-3100
Toll-free elsewhere in B.C.	1 888 621-7233

**WORK SAFE BC**

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### Fish Safe

This is an industry-driven program of the BC Seafood Alliance



Program Manager Gina Johansen 604 261-9700

Program Coordinator John Krgovich 604 261-9700

[www.fishsafebc.com](http://www.fishsafebc.com)



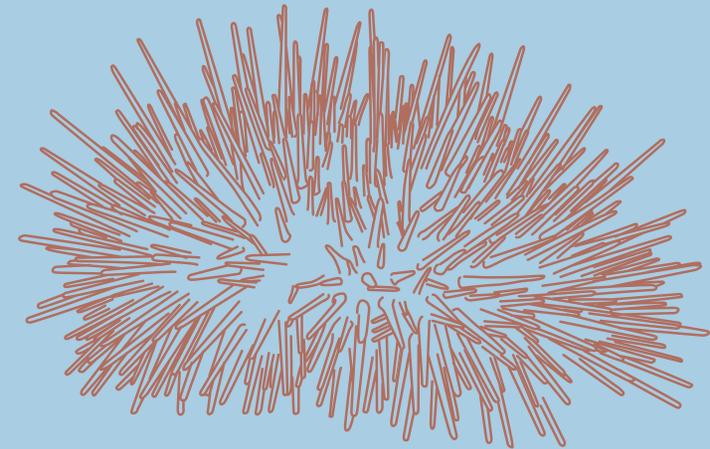
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# Pure POISON

## Fish Spine Injuries

B.C. fishermen face life-threatening infection, tissue destruction and loss of joint mobility — all from the sharp, toxic spines of dogfish, ratfish, rockfish and sea urchins.

Don't let it happen to you.



*Here's what you need to know...*