



DON'T EAT ME!

CIGUATERA FISH POISONING



You can't tell by looking!

10 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Ciguatera (sig-wa-terra) is the **most frequently reported seafood-related disease**, worldwide.
2. The toxin known as ciguatoxin **comes from the algae Gambierdiscus toxicus** which is found in some tropical coral reefs.
3. Ciguatoxin is passed up the food chain to large predatory fish like **barracuda, grouper, and snapper**. (There are over 400 species that have been found to contain this toxin).
4. **Symptoms** of ciguatera fish poisoning include nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, joint and muscle pain, numbness and tingling around the mouth, hands and feet, and reversal of temperature sensation (your hot shower feels cold).
5. Symptoms can **begin in as little as 1 hour after eating** a ciguatoxic fish and can last from a few days to months.

6.-10. ON BACK

6. Ciguatoxic fish **CANNOT** be detected by appearance, taste, or smell and the toxin **CANNOT** be removed by freezing, filleting or cooking the fish. There is no FDA-approved test kit for ciguatera at this time.
7. Florida game fish most commonly associated with ciguatera fish poisoning include barracuda, groupers, snappers, jacks, mackerel, and triggerfish. In general, **the larger the fish, the greater the potential for poisoning.**
8. If you suspect you have Ciguatera Fish Poisoning, seek medical attention. Report your illness to your local county health department and the Florida Poison Information Hotline, 1-800-222-1222. **Ciguatera fish poisoning can be treated with a drug called Mannitol if diagnosed within 24 hours.**
9. **Keep a frozen sample of the fish.** Document the species and size, where it was captured, and how it was stored and prepared.
10. Reduce your risk of getting ciguatera by eating only small reef fish and by avoiding larger fish most likely to carry ciguatera. **Ask local fishermen or bait shops about which reefs to avoid.**

The best protection is to be aware of fishing areas known to have produced ciguatotoxic fish and to be aware of the common fish and the larger fish sizes that cause the illness.

Only buy fish from reputable seafood markets and restaurants.

Florida Poison Information Hotline (toll-free):
1-800-222-1222

