

# Foodborne poisoning: scombroid fish poisoning

## 2007 Case Definition (North Carolina)

### Clinical description

Scombroid fish poisoning is an allergic reaction to scombroid histamines found in fish that experienced bacterial decay after being harvested. Symptoms of the reaction include headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, flushing or itching of the skin, and a peppery taste sensation in the mouth. Symptoms typically develop within minutes to hours after exposure. Fish that have typically been implicated include tuna, mackerel, skipjack, bonito, mahi mahi, and blue fish. Symptoms resolve spontaneously within 12 hours of onset without treatment and without any long-term adverse sequelae.

### Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- Histamine detection in an epidemiologically implicated fish

### Case classification

*Probable:* a clinically compatible case with consumption of fish such as those listed above within three hours of onset of symptom.

*Confirmed:* a clinically compatible case with histamine detection in an epidemiologically implicated fish case that is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case