

DOMOIC ACID

Domoic acid (DA) toxin is naturally produced by several single-cell diatom species of the genus Pseudo-Nitzsche and is not associated with pollution. Pseudo-Nitzsche are native to Alaskan waters and irregular sampling by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has found low DA toxin levels in several areas, but the infrequency of sampling provides no reliable data. DA can be a serious human health problem, causing illness and death. Populations of birds and marine mammals along the west coast of the United States have suffered greatly as a result of DA toxin. Multi-millions in economic losses in the commercial fishing industry on the West Coast continue to occur. Today, Alaska does not appear to have a DA problem, but in reality, we don't know the extent of our risk. The Food and Drug Administration sets the limit in shellfish at 20 ppm. The highest level so far recorded in Alaska was 12 ppm.

APIA domoic acid project: <http://project.nprb.org/view.jsp?id=f74168d8-719d-4817-9a73-a2af708b024f>

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