

## Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis

Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (AVG) is caused by the abalone herpes virus. It affects the nervous system of abalone, causing weakness and eventually death.

It is a notifiable disease, meaning it must be reported.

AVG can spread through the water from infected abalone or abalone product (offal, shells or mucus), fishing equipment (including wetsuits, anchors, rock lobster pots and ropes) and via people who have come into contact with infected abalone or bottom habitat.

Although the virus has never been recorded in South Australia, ongoing surveillance is in place because of its potential to severely impact local abalone stocks and reef ecosystems. AVG is known to occur elsewhere in Australia.

### How to identify AVG



*Clinical signs of AVG, including curling of the foot (yellow arrows) and swollen mouth with an everted radula (red arrow). Source: P Hardy-Smith ([www.agriculture.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.gov.au)).*

Signs of the disease can include:

- High mortality (up to 90% dead) of abalone in an area.
- Edges of the foot curled inwards, leading to poor suction to their tank or reef.
- Swollen mouth parts (see picture above).
- Excessive mucus production.

### Guidelines for decontamination

If you suspect you, your fishing or dive gear has come in to contact with infected abalone or bottom habitat, take the following steps.

## **Vessels**

- Remove all organic matter from the inside and outside of the vessel and dispose of the material on land, away from the water. Move vessel away from the water and wash it with freshwater and detergent.

## **Wetsuits and dive equipment**

- Use neoprene wash for wet suits and mild liquid soap for dive equipment. Soak in soapy freshwater for 30 minutes, rinse and allow to air dry.
- If AVG is suspected or confirmed, then decontamination should also include the use of 200 ppm effective chlorine (e.g. 31 grams of pool chlorine in 100 L of water) for at least 20 minutes. Full details are available by visiting the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority at [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au) > search for a permit > permit number PER86206.

## **If you suspect you have come into contact with infected abalone**

- Wash your hands with soapy freshwater.
- Spray waterproof clothing with soapy freshwater, rinse and allow to air dry.
- Wash clothes in laundry detergent.

## **Protecting South Australian abalone**

You can help keep South Australian abalone free from disease:

- Live abalone must not be brought into South Australia from interstate, unless within the requirements of the *Livestock Act 1997*.
- Do not use dead abalone or abalone gut for bait or berley.
- Remember, dead abalone or abalone gut purchased as seafood for human consumption may have been sourced from outside of South Australia. By using it in South Australian waters, you risk spreading aquatic diseases.
- If you find dead abalone, especially clusters of shells, report it to Fishwatch on 1800 065 522.
- Carefully follow decontamination guidelines if you suspect you or your fishing / diving gear has come into contact with infected abalone.
- Dispose of abalone shell, meat and gut in household rubbish, not at sea.
- For more information on what you can do to help protect our aquatic environments from the introduction of disease, visit [www.agriculture.gov.au/animal/aquatic/what-you-can-do-to-help](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/animal/aquatic/what-you-can-do-to-help).

## **Contact**

AVG is a notifiable disease.

Please report suspected cases immediately to Fishwatch on 1800 065 522. The hotline operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week.