**CAP health & wellness handout: MARINE INJURIES**

Shark bites are rare and generate public attention far outweighing the risk. Generally, there is little risk to swimmers in coastal waters from sharks.

**Jellyfish**

* Contact with the tentacles causes moderate stinging pain that is not dangerous to humans
* Stings may result in a residual, painful rash

**Treatment of jellyfish stings**

* DO NOT attempt to wash the tentacles with fresh water
* DO NOT rub tentacles with sand, towel, or another object
* Rinse the tentacles off the body with sea water
* White household vinegar application by directly pouring on the skin or application of a towel soaked in vinegar are effective ways to remove the tentacles and deactivate the nematocysts

**Portuguese Man O' War**

* Infrequently are blown ashore on the beach
  + Where there is one, there are often many
* Avoid contact with tentacles of beached Man o' War's
* Treat stings in the same manner as jellyfish stings

**Stingrays**

* When threatened, the ray whips the tail stabbing the spine into what it views to be the threat
* The spine can break off and remain embedded in the foot or ankle of the swimmer unlucky enough to step on a stingray

**Treatment of stingray injuries**

* First aid treatment of the sting is immersion of the injured part in hot water, taking care not to burn the patient.
* Professional medical care is required due to the need for meticulous cleaning of the wound and administration of appropriate antibiotics

**Oysters**

* The shells are rather sharp and can cause rather significant laceration to the feet
* Prompt professional medical attention to these injuries as they are frequently contaminated with dirt, sand, and debris.
* Consumption of raw shellfish, such as oysters, should be avoided by those with compromised immune system to avoid potentially severe infections

**Lionfish**

* They are frequently found in coastal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, and Atlantic coasts
* The risk to people is the 18 venomous spines found in the dorsal, pelvic, and anal fins of the fish
* **Treatment of lionfish stings**
  + Prompt immersion in hot water will deactivate the venom and will result in significant pain relief
  + It is recommended that professional medical attention be obtained

**Vibrio vulnificans Infections**

* A severe gastroenteritis can occur with nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea following the ingestion of raw seafood that has been contaminated with Vibrio vulnificans.
* In those with a compromised immune system, such as with diabetes, cancer, and HIV, there is the potential for a very severe infection with a 50% mortality rate associated with eating raw, contaminated seafood.
* Those warnings on restaurant menus are there for a reason!!
* It is for that reason that infections arising following exposure to seawater must be attended immediately by a healthcare professional.

**Fishhook Removal**

Fishermen and "innocent bystanders" are often hooked with an errant fishhook.

There are two common methods to remove hooks applicable to self or buddy care:

* **Push Through and Cut Off Method**
  + In this case, the hook is pushed and rotated through the wound until it exits the skin
  + When the the hook can be seen, it can be grasped by pliers and cut off
  + The hook is then withdrawn

**String Method**

* + The line to the eye of the hook is cut
  + A strong leader line is looped in the bend of the hook
  + Push the eye of the hook down gently to the skin
  + Jerk firmly on the leader line directly in the direction of the shank of the hook
  + Don’t attempt this method unless you are very sure about how it should be done.