

## EuroCigua II

EuroCigua II is a project co-funded by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and eleven organizations from five European countries in order to establish the bases for an integrated approach to assess the human health risk of ciguatoxins in fish.

This project provides more research and continuation to the risk characterization of ciguatera in Europe, started in the previous project EuroCigua, and specifically aims to:

- ◆ **Epidemiological** characterization of ciguatera poisoning (CP) cases;
- ◆ Full characterization of the **ciguatoxins profiles** involved in CP;
- ◆ Establishing capacity building programs to laboratories for the **detection** and **quantification** of ciguatoxins in fish and microalgae;
- ◆ Elaborating **standards** and **reference materials**;
- ◆ Characterization of the **risk** in Europe of CP from imported fish;
- ◆ Characterise and model the **main drivers** which may influence ciguatera patterns in Europe.



# CIGUATERA POISONING

GF/EFSA/KNOW/2022/03



## AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CHARACTERISE THE HUMAN HEALTH RISKS OF CIGUATOXINS IN FISH IN EUROPE

Learn more about ciguatera poisoning:  
recognize the symptoms and how to prevent it



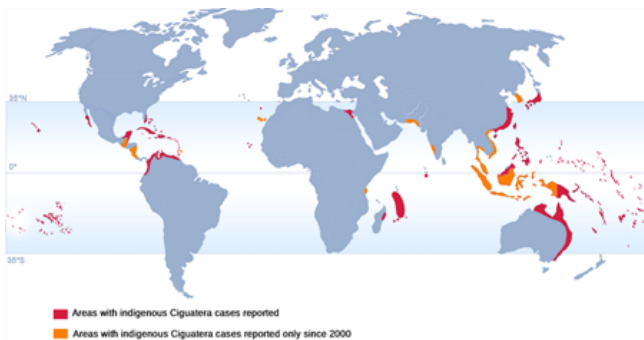
# Ciguatera poisoning

## Description

Ciguatera poisoning is a food poisoning caused by ingesting fish that are contaminated by ciguatoxins.

The fish involved in this illness have accumulated ciguatoxins produced by microalgae, whose habitat is the warm waters of coral reefs, such as Caribbean Sea and Pacific and Indian Oceans (endemic areas).

Since 2008, in Europe, several cases of Ciguatera poisoning were reported by travelers from endemic countries. Several autochthonous outbreaks of this illness were also reported in Madeira and in the Canary Islands, accounting for more than 100 cases in the last years



### Distribution Ciguatera Poisoning cases

<https://www.ciguatera.pf/index.php/en/la-ciguatera/ciguatera-distribution>

## Symptoms

Despite rare, be aware of the main symptoms that can begin in few hours after eating the ciguatoxic fish and can last from a few days to several months:

<b>Gastrointestinal Symptoms</b>	Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, dehydration and diarrhoea.
<b>Cardiovascular Symptoms</b>	Hypotension, tachycardia, bradycardia
<b>Neurological Symptoms</b>	Cold allodynia (burning pain caused by a normally innocuous cold stimulus), itching, dysesthesia, loss of sensation in the extremities "tingling", persistent general weakness, muscle and joint pains, headaches, dizziness, tremors, severe sweating.

If you suspect you have ciguatera poisoning, seek medical attention.

## Prevention

Please note the following precautions in areas with ciguatoxic fish to minimize the risk of ciguatera poisoning:

- *Although risk may possibly increase in larger fish, always follow local recommendations of fish species at risk;*
- *Avoid eating visceral organs, roe (fish eggs) and carcasses (e.g. fish heads, eyes and bones);*
- *Avoid fish from uncertain origin or untraceable point of sale;*
- *Avoid fishing in areas suspected of being contaminated by microalgae.*



Source: <http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/>

These precautions should be taken into account throughout the year as Ciguatera poisoning is not seasonal.

**Ciguatoxins are not destroyed by cooking or by freezing. They are colourless, odourless and flavourless which hinders its perception!**