



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Mary Bassett, MD, MPH  
Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, March 5, 2014  
(347) 396-4177**

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT WARNS PATRONS OF SEAFOOD MARKETS IN  
CHINATOWNS ABOUT SKIN INFECTIONS FROM HANDLING LIVE OR RAW FISH  
OR SEAFOOD**

*People who handle live or raw fish or seafood from markets in Chinatowns are urged to wear waterproof gloves when preparing these items and seek medical care if they have red, tender bumps on their hands or arms.*

**March 5, 2014** – The Health Department announced today that it has identified an outbreak of a rare skin infection in persons who handled live or raw fish or seafood that was purchased in markets in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens Chinatowns. The bacteria which causes the infection, *Mycobacterium marinum* (*M. marinum*), enters the skin through a cut or other injury while handling live or raw fish or seafood. Symptoms of *M. marinum* include red, tender swelling under the skin of the hands and arms, hand or arm pain, and difficulty moving fingers. People are encouraged to wear waterproof gloves in their home when preparing live or raw fish or seafood that came from a market in Chinatown, especially if they have cuts or abrasions. Employees of both these seafood markets and restaurants that purchase food from these markets also are urged to wear waterproof gloves when handling live or raw fish or seafood. There is no risk associated with consuming the food from these markets.

If you show any symptoms or believe you are at risk, please see a dermatologist or infectious disease physician and explain that you think you may have a skin infection (*M. marinum*) that occurs after contact with live or raw fish or seafood. It is important to begin antibiotic treatment early. If left untreated, *M. marinum* can evolve over weeks and months into more serious infections that require surgical treatment. You also can call the Health Department's Bureau of Communicable Disease at 347-396-2600 and ask to speak to a physician.

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