

A hidden danger lurks among the reefs.

Beware of Ciguatera

(pronounced sig-wa t'erra)



Hogfish (*Lactotaimus maximus*)

Tiny algae can produce toxins that concentrate in the organs and flesh of large carnivorous reef fish (such as barracuda, hogfish, red snapper and groupers). Ciguatera fish doesn't look or taste bad.

Symptoms of ciguatera appear within

6-24 hours, and include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and cramping, as well as unusual sensations (such as itching skin, aching teeth and painful urination).

The classic symptom of ciguatera is the sensation that cold things feel hot to the touch. For some people, these symptoms come and go for months or even years, and can be triggered by eating seafood, caffeine or alcohol.



Gag grouper (*Mycteroperca microlepis*)

Reduce your risk of getting ciguatera by eating only small reef fish and by avoiding species most likely to carry ciguatera. Ask local

fishermen or bait shops about which reefs or fish to avoid.



Barracuda (*Ephyraena barracuda*)

Ciguatera can be treated with a drug called mannitol if diagnosed within 72 hours.

Report your symptoms and that you ate reef fish to your doctor or local emergency room. Call the toll free Aquatic Toxins Hotline at (888) 232-8635 to get treatment advice.



Red Snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*)