



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Rob Hayes  
850-245-4111

**STATEMENT FROM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SECRETARY  
REGARDING THE CONSUMPTION OF PUFFER FISH**

TALLAHASSEE—The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is currently investigating two suspected food poisoning cases that may be related to the consumption of puffer fish (also called blowfish) caught off the Atlantic Coast of Florida.

“It is important for people to understand that cooking the fish cannot destroy the toxin. The message is simple, yet serious. There is a health risk associated with the consumption of puffer fish,” said DOH Secretary John O. Agwunobi, MD, MBA.

**Neurotoxin Facts**

Neurotoxin poisoning develops fairly rapidly after the consumption of the contaminated fish, within ½ - 2 hours, depending on the amount of toxin consumed.

**Symptoms**

Symptoms are primarily neurological and include: tingling, burning, numbness, drowsiness, incoherent speech, and respiratory paralysis. It is also possible to experience nausea and vomiting. In severe cases, poisoning can cause death.

**Treatment**

If you experience neurological symptoms as described above and have consumed puffer fish, please contact your physician or emergency room immediately.

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