



**For Immediate Release**  
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## 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.

“The message is simple. The consumption of puffer fish is a serious health risk,” said DOH Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A. “It is important for people to enjoy outdoor activities in our great state but they must understand that cooking the fish cannot destroy the toxin. There is no way to properly clean puffer fish to make it safe for eating.”

### **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.

For more information on neurotoxins, visit [www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us)

For more information on fishing guidelines, visit <http://floridaconservation.org/>

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