

July 3, 2014



## **‘No Swim’ advisory issued for Nokomis Beach**

SARASOTA COUNTY — Sarasota County health officials have issued a "No Swim" advisory for Nokomis Beach located at 100 Casey Key Road in Nokomis due to elevated levels of enterococci (enteric) bacteria on Thursday, July 3.

Local health officials say that this is the second “no swim” advisory in Sarasota County in two years. The most recent advisory was for Venice Beach during the past week and was lifted after two days. For the current advisory, the county’s response team has ruled out sewage spills and determined that the cause is likely due to natural sources. The team observed a higher than normal accumulation of marine algae along the shoreline which can be a source of bacteria. Recent rains which tend to wash accumulated pollutants, including bacteria from birds, wildlife, and pet waste into local waterways could also be a factor. Another possible natural source that could contribute to the elevated bacteria levels are higher surf conditions which can churn up sand from the bottom and affect water quality.

Signage advising the public not to swim or engage in water recreation at Nokomis Beach will remain in place until follow-up water testing results meet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recreational water safety standards. The results of follow-up water testing will be available tomorrow, Friday, July 4.

“The Florida Healthy Beaches program protects beach goers from conditions unsuitable for swimming by sampling beach water and providing accurate and up-to-date explanations of the results,” said Tom Higginbotham, Florida Department of Health Environmental Administrator.

Testing has revealed bacteria levels within acceptable limits at the following area beaches:

North Lido Beach	North Jetty Beach
South Lido Beach	Venice Beach
Lido Casino Beach	Venice Fishing Pier
Siesta Key Beach	Service Club Beach
Ringling Causeway Beach	Brohard Beach
Longboat Key Public Beach	Caspersen Beach
Turtle Beach	Manasota Key Beach
	Blind Pass Beach

Local health officials emphasize that people can still visit and enjoy the beach. However, residents and visitors are urged to take precautions by not wading or swimming in the water or engaging in water recreation at the Nokomis Beach until the advisory is lifted.

In addition, shellfish such as crabs and shrimp collected in the immediate area of Nokomis Beach should not be consumed. However, it is safe to fish and consume fin-fish from these waters.

The “no-swim” advisories are based on elevated levels of “enteric” bacteria, some of which are naturally present in the environment. Enteric bacteria can come from a variety of natural and man-made sources including pet waste, livestock, wildlife, stormwater runoff, and human sewage from failed septic systems and sewage spills.

“When these bacteria are detected in high concentrations in recreational waters, there is a risk that some people who swallow water while swimming or have contact with water entering the skin through a cut or sore may become ill with gastrointestinal illnesses, infections or rashes.” says Higginbotham. “This can be prevented by taking the appropriate precautions especially while the advisory is in effect.”

“Our world-class beaches are a wonderful asset to our community,” said Virginia Haley, president of Visit Sarasota County. “When making beach day plans, be sure to check the latest reports on beach conditions.”

For more information:

- Visit <https://ourgulfenvironment.scgov.net> and click on water monitoring and then bacterial testing to check beach water testing results of area Gulf beaches.
- Call 941-BEACHES (941-232-2437) or visit [www.mote.org/beaches](http://www.mote.org/beaches). Click on the same link to the mobile-friendly version of the beach conditions report.
- The local visitor and convention bureau known as Visit Sarasota County also provides extensive information about the Sarasota area, including its beaches. The website is [www.visitsarasota.org](http://www.visitsarasota.org).

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***MEDIA NOTES:*** A news release will be issued when the advisory is lifted.

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Our Gulf Environment website: <https://ourgulfenvironment.scgov.net>