

June 26, 2014



‘No Swim’ advisory issued for Venice Beach

SARASOTA COUNTY — Sarasota County health officials have issued a "No Swim" advisory for Venice Beach, located at 101 The Esplanade in Venice, due to elevated levels of enterococci (enteric) bacteria on Thursday, June 26.

Signage advising the public not to swim or engage in water recreation at Venice 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 on Friday, June 27.

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

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

Local health officials emphasize that people can still visit and enjoy the beach. However, residents and visitors are urged not to wade or swim in the water or engage in water recreation until the advisory is lifted. Shellfish such as crabs and shrimp collected in the immediate area of Venice Beach should not be consumed. However, it is safe to fish and consume fin-fish from these waters.

“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.

The “no-swim” advisories are based on elevated levels of indicator bacteria, some of which are naturally present in the environment.

“We know that these bacteria inhabit the intestines of humans and warm-blooded animals,” Higginbotham said. “Therefore, 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.”

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Enteric bacteria can come from a variety of sources including pet waste and wildlife, stormwater runoff, and human sewage from failed septic systems and sewage spills. The local rapid response team from the City of Venice has ruled out stormwater runoff, septic systems and sewage spills as a source of the bacteria. There have been no sewage spills in the area and no recent rain events to create stormwater runoff. Therefore, the elevated bacteria levels appear to be from natural sources such as birds and wildlife.

“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. 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.

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

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DOH-Sarasota website: www.sarasotahealth.org

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