

SCGOV HEALTH

Sarasota County Health Department | ☐ Florida Department of Health
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Sept. 30, 2011

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Red tide update issued in Sarasota County

Beach water samples collected Wednesday, Sept. 28, by the Sarasota County Health Department and analyzed by Mote Marine Laboratory indicate that Florida red tide algae, *Karenia brevis*, was near shore in medium concentrations between Manasota Key and the Venice Jetty. At this time, there have been no reports of red tide impacts to Sarasota County beaches. Health Department staff will continue working with Mote to monitor *K. brevis* along Sarasota County beaches.

- For Mote's recent update on offshore water conditions, please visit www.mote.org/fridaysnews9-30-11.
- For biweekly red tide monitoring reports from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, visit: <http://myfwc.com/research/redtide/events/status/statewide/>

Health officials say that many people can still enjoy the beaches even when Florida red tide occurs near area shores. Tides and winds can change conditions several times daily. Potential health impacts from red tide could become a concern at Sarasota area beaches if the algae concentrations increase and winds move in an onshore direction.

During red tide events, people may experience mild and short-lived respiratory symptoms such as eye, nose and throat irritation similar to cold symptoms. Those with severe or chronic respiratory conditions such as asthma or chronic lung disease are cautioned to avoid red tide areas.

Individuals experiencing these symptoms should stay away from affected beach areas; once a person leaves the red tide area, the symptoms usually go away.

A rash can sometimes occur after contact with affected water, and usually goes away within 24 hours. After swimming in an affected area, it is a good idea to rinse off with clean fresh water. Swallowed water is unlikely to cause health effects.

Residents living in beach areas affected by Florida red tide are advised to close windows and run the air conditioner (making sure that the A/C filter is maintained according to manufacturer's specifications).

Individuals should not eat locally harvested molluscan shellfish such as oysters, clams and coquinas when red tide may be present. Shellfish available through restaurants and commercial food suppliers are considered safe to consume.

The Florida Poison Control Information Center in Miami has a toll-free Aquatic Toxins Hotline, open 24 hours a day every day, for reporting of illnesses from exposure to red tide, or for more information on red tide and associated health effects, at 1-888-232-8635.

Because the red tide conditions can change quickly, residents and visitors are urged to get regular updates on Sarasota County beach conditions by visiting the following website:

Mote Marine Laboratory's Beach Conditions Report: www.mote.org/beaches (twice-daily beach conditions updates)

Residents and visitors also can call Mote Marine Laboratory for the daily beach conditions report at 941-BEACHES. Press 1 for Sarasota County.

For more information about red tide, visit <http://www.mote.org/index.php?src=faq&category=florida%20red%20tide>.

Concentrations of *K. brevis* and their descriptions, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: (NOTE: a given concentration of *K. brevis* does not necessarily mean the effects below are occurring. Please feel free to check with the conservation commission and Mote Marine Laboratory for updates from the current monitoring effort.)

- Not present/background: No effects anticipated
- Very low: Possible respiratory irritation; shellfish harvesting closures
- Low: respiratory Irritation, possible fish kills and bloom chlorophyll probably detected by satellites at upper limits
- Medium: Respiratory irritation and probable fish kills
- High: As above, plus water discoloration

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