



Sarasota County Health Department | Florida Department of Health
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Sarasota area beach water advisory issued for Venice Beach

A beach water advisory has been issued for Venice Beach, located at the west end of Venice Avenue, one mile west of Business 41. Sarasota County Health Department officials received testing results from beach water samples taken on Wednesday, Jan. 25, that show an elevated level of enterococci (enteric) bacteria.

Other Venice beaches that are not under a beach water advisory and are safe for swimming and recreational sports are South Jetty, Brohard Beach, Venice Fishing Pier and Service Club Park.

Health officials say that the advisory is limited to the beach water at the beach access at the west end of Venice Avenue. 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 are satisfactory.

The Health Department plans to conduct follow-up water sampling on Friday, Jan. 27, with results expected in the afternoon on Saturday, Jan. 28.

The red tide algae bloom in the area is not implicated in this enteric bacteria beach water advisory.

"We never like to issue advisories and are sensitive to their impact on the community," said Sarasota County Health Department's Interim Environmental Administrator Virginia Bess. "However, as part of our role in protecting the health of the public, we conduct weekly water sampling at 16 area beaches along Sarasota County's 34 miles of beaches, following a protocol established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). "The intent of this program is to provide county residents and visitors with accurate, up-to-date information on the water quality at our beaches."

Enteric bacteria can come from stormwater runoff, pet waste and wildlife and human sewage. When detected in high concentrations in recreational waters, these bacteria can cause gastrointestinal illnesses, infections or rashes if ingested while swimming or after entering the skin through a cut or sore.

Residents and visitors may still use Venice Beach, but they are urged not to wade or swim in the water or engage in water recreation until the advisory is lifted. It is safe to fish and consume fish from these waters.

Residents and visitors can visit www.OurGulfEnvironment.net and click on water monitoring and then bacterial testing to check beach water testing results of area Gulf beaches, or call the Sarasota County Health Department's Environmental Health office at 941-861-6133.

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

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