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NEWSROOM

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

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Sarasota area 'no swim' advisory issued for Lido Casino Beach

A "no swim" advisory has been issued for Lido Casino Beach, 400 Ben Franklin Drive, Lido Key. Sarasota County Health Department officials received testing results from beach water samples taken on Wednesday, Aug. 15, that show an elevated level of enterococci (enteric) bacteria.

Sarasota County area beaches that are **not under a "no swim" advisory** are: Longboat Key Public Beach, Ringling Causeway, North and South Lido Beaches, Siesta Key Beach, North Jetty Beach, Nokomis Beach, Venice Beach, Venice Fishing Pier, Service Club Beach, Brohard Beach, Caspersen Beach, Blind Pass Beach, and Manasota Key.

"We never like to issue advisories and are sensitive to their impact on the community. However, the intent of the Florida Healthy Beaches program is to provide residents and visitors with accurate, up-to-date information about the water quality at our 16 area beaches," said Sarasota County Health Department Environmental Health Director Tom Higginbotham.

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 collected in the immediate area of the Lido Casino Beach or any beach water that has a brown tint should not be consumed; however, it is safe to fish and consume fin fish from these waters.

Signage advising the public not to swim or engage in water recreation at Lido Casino Beach will remain in place until follow-up water testing results meet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recreational water safety standards. The Health Department plans to conduct follow-up water sampling on Friday, Aug. 17, with results expected in the afternoon on Saturday, Aug. 18.

The EPA water quality standards are very protective of human health. 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 warm-blooded humans and 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."

"Enteric bacteria can come from a variety of sources, including stormwater runoff, pet and wildlife waste, and human sewage. The local rapid response team that includes officials from Sarasota County Environmental Utilities has ruled out a sewage spill and storm water outfalls; however, we did observe massive amounts of algae along the shoreline and in the water concluding that the elevated bacteria levels were likely from non-human sources," said Environmental Scientist Kathy Meaux of Sarasota County Environmental Utilities.

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

For more information:

- Visit www.OurGulfEnvironment.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).
- Visit Sarasota County also provides extensive information about Sarasota, including its beaches. The website is www.visitsarasota.org.

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

