

Sept. 11, 2014



## **‘No Swim’ advisory issued for North Lido Beach**

SARASOTA COUNTY — Sarasota County health officials have issued a precautionary "No Swim" advisory for:

- North Lido Beach – 400 Ben Franklin Drive, Sarasota

The “No Swim” advisory is due to elevated levels of enterococci (enteric) bacteria, some of which are naturally present in the environment, on Thursday, Sept. 11. Signage advising the public not to swim or engage in water recreation at North Lido 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, Sept. 12.

Enteric (enterococcus bacteria) can come from a variety of natural and man-made sources including pet waste, baby diapers when young children are playing at the water’s edge, livestock, birds, wildlife (land-dwelling and marine), stormwater runoff, and human sewage from failed septic systems and sewage spills.

The county’s response team, which includes partners from the city of Sarasota, observed large numbers of shorebirds and bird tracks all along the beach. The team also observed a wrack line of decaying algae. Wrack lines, which contain marine algae and a variety of marine organisms that provide food for shorebirds and wildlife, act as natural sources of bacteria. Recent rains that wash accumulated pollutants, including bacteria from pet feces, birds, and wildlife into local waterways, could also be a factor. There have been no sewage spills within one-mile of this beach area in the past month. The team has determined that the cause of the elevated bacteria levels is likely due to natural sources.

Florida Department of Health Environmental Administrator Tom Higginbotham emphasizes that 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.”

The “no-swim” advisories are based on elevated levels of “enteric” bacteria, some of which are naturally present in the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found a correlation between the levels of enterococci bacteria in recreational water and human health.

“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.

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Local health officials emphasize that beaches remain open. However, residents and visitors are urged to take precautions by not wading or swimming in the water or engaging in water recreation at North Lido Beach until the advisory is lifted. In addition, shellfish such as crabs and shrimp collected in the immediate area of North Lido Beach should not be consumed. However, it is safe to fish and consume fin-fish from these waters.

“Our coastline of over 30 miles of world-class beaches is a wonderful asset to our community,” says Virginia Haley, president of Visit Sarasota County. “Let’s work together to help preserve this amenity.”

To help keep beach water safe for swimming and recreation, officials say people should not allow pets to roam on beaches and in park areas and pick up pet waste since summer rains tend to wash accumulated pollutants, including bacteria from birds and wildlife into local waterways. Additionally, children in diapers and people of all ages who are experiencing diarrhea should not go into the water.

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

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

“It is important to know that our beaches are never closed. However, it is best to check the latest reports on beach conditions before heading out to the beach,” says Haley.

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.

**DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:**

Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; [DOHSarasotaNews@FLHealth.gov](mailto:DOHSarasotaNews@FLHealth.gov)

DOH-Sarasota website: [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org)

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