

NEWS RELEASE



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Health advisory issued for water contact at Sunset Bay State Park Beach:

Higher than normal bacteria levels found at Coos County beach

A public health advisory was issued Thursday due to higher-than-normal levels of bacteria in ocean waters at Sunset Bay State Park Beach in Coos County.

Increased pathogen and fecal bacteria levels in ocean waters can come from both shore and inland sources such as animal waste from seabirds, pets and livestock, storm water runoff, sewer overflows and failing septic systems.

Water samples indicate higher-than-normal levels of fecal bacteria, which can result in gastroenteritis, skin rashes and other illnesses. Direct contact with the water should be avoided until the advisory is lifted, especially for children and the elderly who may be more vulnerable to waterborne bacteria.

While this advisory is in effect at Sunset Bay State Park Beach visitors should avoid wading in nearby creeks or in discolored water, and stay clear of water runoff flowing into the ocean. Even if there is no advisory in effect, officials recommend avoiding swimming in the ocean within 48 hours after a rainstorm.

State officials advise that the status of water contact advisories at beaches is subject to change. For the most recent information on advisories, please visit www.healthoregon.org/beach or call 1-877-290-6767.

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Although state officials discourage water contact, they continue to encourage other recreational activities such as walking, playing on the beach, flying kites and picnicking on these beaches because they pose no health risk even during an advisory. Neighboring beaches are not affected by this advisory.

Since 2003 state officials have used a federal Environmental Protection Agency grant to monitor popular Oregon beaches and make timely reports to the public about elevated levels of fecal bacteria. Oregon state organizations participating in this program are Oregon Public Health, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. For more information contact the Beach Monitoring Program at 971-673-0400 or www.healthoregon.org/beach.

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