



Peach on the Beach

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Beach Water Quality Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: Are the beaches closed when there is an advisory?

A: The beaches are not closed, however the Glynn/Chatham County Health Department recommends that you not swim in the water.

Q: Why are the beaches under advisory?

A: The beach water tested high for harmful bacteria that may cause illness. Bacteria, and other types of pollution frequently come from sewage overflows, storm water runoff, sewage treatment malfunctions, boating wastes, and malfunctioning septic systems. These types of pollution are often highest after rain.

Q: Can I swim or wade in the water?

A: The Glynn/Chatham County Health Department recommends you not swim or wade in the water.

Q: What is wrong with wading in the water?

A: Risk of illness comes from contacting beach water in several ways. Those include ingesting water while swimming, getting water in the nose, eyes, and ears, or getting water in an open wound. A person wading in the water may unknowingly subject themselves to a wound infection. If one has an open wound on the lower legs or feet, it could become infected even from wading.

Q: Is it safe to walk on the beach?

A: Yes

Q: Will I get sick if I go in the water?

A: You are at an increased risk of illness. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed standards for setting beach advisories. Those standards are based on epidemiological studies, and are intended to keep the risks of contracting an illness from the beach water from becoming unacceptably high. However, the science is not definitive enough to predict how great the risk is for water contact when the advisory is in place. It should be noted that contracting an illness from contact with beach water during an advisory is not a certainty.

Q: What kind of illness?

A: Gastrointestinal, Wound Infection, Respiratory Infection, Urinary Tract Infection. The degree of illnesses may range from minor conditions such as a sore throat, an ear infection, or mild stomach upset (diarrhea) to more serious conditions. Because our bodies own defenses (immune system) help protects us from many of these types of illnesses, people who may have weakened immune systems (young children and the elderly) may have a greater chance of getting sick.

Q: Who decides if the water is unsafe?

A: As mentioned above, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends the standards for healthy water.

Q: Can I eat the fish I've caught from a beach that is under advisory?

A: Yes, fish and other seafood caught from waters under a beach advisory should be thoroughly washed with fresh water and thoroughly cooked before consumption. But when properly cleaned and prepared, there is no risk from consuming the fish and seafood.

Q: Will my dog get sick if he drinks the seawater?

A: Don't allow your dog to drink too much seawater at any time. For dogs, just drinking salt water can cause diarrhea or vomiting and quickly dehydrate them.

Q: How can I find out if a beach is under advisory or not?

A: You can log onto <http://crd.dnr.state.ga.us> and under quick links on the right hand, left click on current beach advisory status.