



Coastal Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Beach Advisories Issued on Tybee Island

CHATHAM COUNTY, GA – The Chatham County Health Department has issued water quality advisories for 2 beach locations on Tybee Island. The advisory areas are Polk Street Beach from the north end of the island to the jetty, and Tybee Strand Beach at the Pier from Eleventh St. to Eighteenth St.

These advisories are only for the areas specified above and do not impact the other beach areas on the island. There is no way of knowing if going into water that is under advisory will result in illness. However, these beach water advisories are to alert the public of a possible risk of illness associated with water contact. An area under advisory does not mean the beach is closed.

Water samples are collected routinely throughout the year on Tybee Island, and tested for enterococcus (pronounced: en-ter-o-coc-cus) bacteria which is found in warm blooded animals including humans but also birds, raccoons, deer, dolphins, and other wildlife. It is difficult to determine exactly where the bacteria come from, but some sources could include animal waste, storm water runoff, or boating waste. When a beach is under advisory, it means that the level of bacteria found in the water is above the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recommended standards.

The Chatham County Health Department recommends you do not swim or wade in the water in the area under advisory. Fish and other seafood caught from this area should be thoroughly washed with fresh water and thoroughly cooked before eating, as should fish or seafood caught from any waters. The areas will be re-tested, and the advisories will be lifted when tests show the bacteria levels meet the EPA's recommended standards. For more information about beach water testing, go to www.gachd.org and click on the Environmental Health tab.

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We Protect Lives.