



RED TIDE

TOP 10 RED TIDE FACTS:

1. In Florida, red tide is caused by a naturally occurring microscopic alga (a plant-like microorganism) called *Karenia brevis* or *K. brevis*.
2. The organism produces a toxin that can affect the central nervous systems of fish, birds, mammals, and other animals.
3. At high concentrations (called blooms), the organism may discolor the water — sometimes red, light or dark green, or brown.
4. Red tides or harmful algal blooms (HABs) occur worldwide. *K. brevis* is found almost exclusively in the Gulf of Mexico but has been found on the east coast of Florida and off the coast of North Carolina.
5. Red tide blooms can last days, weeks, or months and can also change daily due to wind conditions and water currents. Onshore winds normally bring it near the shore and offshore winds drive it out to sea.
6. Red tide was first officially recorded in Florida in 1844.
7. A red tide bloom needs biology (the organisms), chemistry (natural or man-made nutrients for growth), and physics (concentrating and transport mechanisms). No single factor causes it. Tests are being conducted to see if coastal nutrients enhance or prolong blooms.
8. Red tide can irritate the skin and breathing of some people. (See more about health effects on reverse.)
9. Seafood from restaurants and hotels is monitored and is safe to eat. Avoid eating clams and oysters harvested recreationally from red tide waters. (See reverse.)
10. Mote Marine Laboratory publishes updated information on beach conditions, including red tide, twice daily. Visit www.mote.org/beaches.

If you have a question or a health problem related to red tide, please call the Sarasota County Call Center at:

941-861-5000

Report Fish Kills: 800-636-0511 [FWC]

Red Tide Info & Status Reports: MyFWC.com/Research

Red Tide Facts: START1.org

Current Beach Conditions: mote.org/beaches
or call 941-BEACHES (232-2437)