

Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
State Surgeon General and Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

Florida Healthy Beaches Program
Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **How often do you sample?** Once a week, with resampling as necessary.
2. **Where do you sample?** We sample at 16 public beaches in Sarasota County. That includes Longboat Key, Ringling Causeway, North Lido, Lido Casino, South Lido, Siesta Key, Turtle Beach, Nokomis, North Jetty, Venice Beach, Service Club, Venice Fishing Pier, Brohard Park, Caspersen, Manasota Key, and Blind Pass.
3. **What do you check for?** Enterococcus, a bacteria found in the intestines of people and animals. Enterococcus is an indicator organism; an elevated concentration indicates that other harmful organisms might be present (harmful bacteria, viruses, protozoa). We also take samples for Mote Marine Laboratory to check for the presence of red tide (*karenia brevis*).
4. **When do you post advisories?** When a weekly sample has a poor result (71 or greater CFU per 100 mL) then we will resample. A poor resample will result in an advisory recommending against swimming being posted. We will also post an advisory when the geometric mean becomes poor. The geometric mean is a type of average that is calculated from the samples of the last 30 days; when this number is above 35, it is considered poor, and an advisory is posted.

Enterococcus (CFU per 100 ml)		
Good	Moderate	Poor
0-35	36-70	71 or greater

5. **What could happen if I swim during an advisory?** The most common illnesses that occur due to swimming in water with elevated bacteria are skin rashes, infections in the ears or eyes, and gastrointestinal illness. People with compromised immune systems are at the highest risk of becoming sick.
6. **How can I find out if there is an advisory?** Sample results for bacteria and red tide are posted on our website, www.ourgulfenvironment.net.