

Beach Advisory

Fort Myers, FL—Lee County Health Department is posting an advisory on Bowditch Beach as unsafe for swimmers due to high levels of bacteria identified in routine weekly testing.

Tests completed on Tuesday, August 9, 2011, indicate that the water quality at Bowditch Beach does not meet the safety criteria for enterococcus and coliform bacteria recommended by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Florida Department of Health. Water contact may pose an increased risk of disease, particularly for susceptible individuals.

• We recommend not swimming at Bowditch Beach on the north end of Estero Island.

Enterococcus and coliform bacteria normally inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals. The presence of an elevated concentration of these bacteria is an indicator of pollution, which may come from storm water runoff, pets, wildlife, or sewage.

Elevated levels of enterococcus bacteria have been associated with an increased risk of swimming-associated gastroenteritis illness (diarrhea and abdominal pain).

Several other beaches with high bacteria levels will be retested tomorrow. If those tests show unsafe levels after a 24-hour incubation period, they will be posted Thursday.

This advisory will continue until bacteria levels are below the accepted EPA level. New test results for Bowditch Beach and other beaches will be in by 3:30 p.m. Thursday, August 11, 2011. A new round of water samples on all Lee County beaches will be taken Monday with results showing 24 hours later.

For more information, please view our internet website at www.doh.state.fl.us select Services, Environmental Health, and then Healthy Beaches, or call the Lee County Health Department at (239) 274-2200 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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