



October 25, 2018

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Health advisory issued October 25 for water contact at Sunset Bay State Park Beach

The Oregon Health Authority issued a public health advisory today for higher-than-normal levels of bacteria in ocean waters at Sunset Bay State Park Beach, located in Coos County.

Water samples indicate higher-than-normal levels of fecal bacteria, which can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, skin rashes, upper respiratory infections and other illnesses. People should avoid direct contact with the water in this area until the advisory is lifted. This applies especially to children and the elderly, who may be more vulnerable to waterborne bacteria.

Increased pathogen and fecal bacteria levels in ocean waters can come from both shore and inland sources such as stormwater runoff, sewer overflows, failing septic systems, and animal waste from livestock, pets and wildlife.

While this advisory is in effect at Sunset Bay State Park Beach, visitors should avoid wading in nearby creeks, pools of water on the beach, or in discolored water, and stay clear of water runoff flowing into the ocean. Even if there is no advisory in effect, officials recommend avoiding swimming in the ocean within 48 hours after a rainstorm.

Although state officials advise against water contact, they continue to encourage other recreational activities (flying kites, picnicking, playing on the beach, walking, etc.) on this beach because they pose no health risk even during an advisory. Neighboring beaches are not affected by this advisory.

The status of water contact advisories at beaches is subject to change. For the most recent information on advisories, visit the [Oregon Beach Monitoring Program](http://www.healthoregon.org/beach) website at <http://www.healthoregon.org/beach> or call 971-673-0440, or 877-290-6767 (toll-free).

Since 2003 state officials have used a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant to monitor popular Oregon beaches and make timely reports to the public about elevated levels of fecal bacteria. Oregon state organizations participating in this program are the Oregon Health Authority, Department of Environmental Quality, and Parks and Recreation Department.

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