The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) issued a public health advisory today for higher-than-normal levels of bacteria in ocean waters at Hubbard Creek Beach in Curry County.

People should avoid direct contact with the water in these areas until the advisory is lifted. Higher-than-normal levels of fecal bacteria can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, skin rashes, upper respiratory infections and other illnesses. This applies especially to children and the elderly, who may be more vulnerable to illness from 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 the advisory is in effect at Hubbard Creek 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.

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 website at http://www.healthoregon.org/beach or call 971-673-0482, or 877-290-6767 (toll-free).

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