

**Mission:**

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



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
April 18, 2014

**Contact:** DOH Communications  
(850) 245-4111

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ADVISES OF POSSIBLE WASTEWATER  
CONTAMINATION**

*~Wastewater overflow from Valdosta, GA, may impact Withlacoochee & Suwannee Rivers~*

**TALLAHASSEE-** The Florida Department of Health today issued an advisory to residents in counties surrounding the Withlacoochee and the downstream Suwannee River. The City of Valdosta has reported a spill, made up of a combination of storm water and untreated sewage, that has overflowed into the One-Mile Branch, Two-Mile Branch, Sugar Creek and Cherry Creek which flow into the Withlacoochee River. Lab test results received April 18, 2014, indicate higher than normal levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the river waters.

Until further information is known regarding possible contamination of the rivers, residents are urged to take precautions when in contact with the Withlacoochee River and a portion of the Suwannee River. This includes those individuals in the counties of Hamilton, Madison, and Suwannee. The advisory extends to all of the Withlacoochee River and the portion of the Suwannee River from the point where the two rivers join, south 12 miles to State Road 250 at Dowling Park.

Water contaminated by wastewater overflow presents several health hazards to humans and may contain untreated human sewage with microbes that could cause gastro-intestinal and other diseases.

Anyone who comes in contact with the river water should wash thoroughly, especially before eating or drinking. Children and older adults, as well as people with weakened immune systems, are particularly vulnerable to disease, so every precaution should be taken if in contact with the river water.

For more information about the potential health effects of wastewater overflow, Floridians are encouraged to contact their local county health department. To find contact information for your county health department, please visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).

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