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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONTINUES TO MONITOR WATER QUALITY FOLLOWING SEWAGE SPILL IN ST. PETERSBURG



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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Earlier this month, a large amount of partially-treated wastewater was discharged from the city of St. Petersburg into Tampa Bay. As part of the Florida Healthy Beaches Program, the department routinely monitors and conducts water testing at nine beaches in Pinellas County and five beaches in Hillsborough County. Some of these beaches are near the area of the sewage spill. Sampling was conducted on Monday, September 12 at all 14 sites. Water quality levels were either good or moderate for all locations but one. The department issued one advisory for Simmons Park Beach, which is across the bay from St. Petersburg. All testing results are reported on the department's [website](#) each week and are available to the public.

The city of St. Petersburg is responsible for conducting testing in the immediate area of the sewage spill. Beginning today, at Governor Scott's direction, DOH will begin additional testing at this site. Last week, the department asked the city of St. Petersburg to share their test results with us for our own review and analysis. According to the city, sampling taken the day after Hurricane Hermine showed satisfactory results in the immediate area of the spill. Today, the department is working with the city of St. Petersburg to perform confirmatory sampling for Northshore Beach, Lassing Park and Spa Beach along with other creeks and canals in the city. While these areas are not part of our normal Healthy Beaches monitoring program, the department is committed to keeping Florida's waters safe.

The department will continue to monitor water quality and conduct testing at sampling sites in Pinellas and Hillsborough County and will immediately provide the public with information about results. The department conducted another round of testing today and Simmons Park Beach remains under an advisory. All other area beach results were good or moderate. The department is committed to working with local and state agencies to ensure the public has critical information about their environment, and that the health and safety of Florida's residents and visitors are protected.

About the Florida Healthy Beaches Program

Florida's world-class beaches and waters are one of our state's signature attractions and offer exceptional recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. To help ensure Florida's waters are safe and to protect our pristine beaches, the Florida Department of Health has been monitoring water quality in 30 coastal counties since 2000.

The department tests water on a weekly or bi-weekly basis at various sampling sites in 30 coastal counties for the presence of enterococci bacteria, a bacterium normally found in the intestinal tract of humans and animals. The presence of these of bacteria in water can be an indication of fecal pollution, which may come from stormwater runoff, pets and wildlife or human sewage. If the bacteria are present in high concentrations and are ingested while swimming or enter the skin through a cut or sore, it can lead to illness, infections or rashes.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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