

Sewage spill impacts beach complex

PROVIDED BY CHARLOTTE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) Charlotte County Health Department is issuing a precautionary beach advisory for the Port Charlotte Beach Complex.

Charlotte County Utilities had a greater than 10,000 gallon raw sewage spill from a force main that emptied into the Fordham waterway.

As the waterway passes by the beach complex, in the interest of public health, the beach advisory is issued by the Florida Department of Health. Samples will be taken and when results are known to be free of bacterial contamination associated with sewage the advisory will be lifted. This area should be considered a potential health risk to the bathing public. If high concentrations of these bacteria are ingested or enter through an open cut or sore, they may cause human disease or infection. The most common symptoms include rashes, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.

Enteric bacteria such as fecal coliform and enterococci normally inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals, and may cause human disease, infections or rashes. The presence of enteric bacteria is an indication of fecal pollution, which may come from storm water runoff, pets, wildlife and human sewage. The bacteria have been associated with large flocks of seabirds roosting on this beach in the past.

Signs placed near the beach will read "This Beach Monitored as Part of the Healthy Beaches Program — ADVISORY — High Bacteria Levels — Swimming NOT Recommended — Increased Risk of Illness at This Time." Signs remain posted until bacteria levels have been determined to be acceptable by standards set forth by U.S. EPA.