



Health Department says stay out of the water at some Southwest Florida beaches

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CHARLOTTE COUNTY, Fla. - It may be beautiful weather at the beach, but you may need to steer clear of the water in some areas this weekend.

The Charlotte County health department is issuing a swimming advisory for a number of Southwest Florida beaches, after recent water samples revealed a dirty dilemma.

For James Williams and family, a vacation to enjoy Southwest Florida beaches isn't quite panning out as planned. Swimming advisories are now in affect at a handful of Charlotte County beaches, thanks to unusually high levels of two different types of bacteria.

"It's a shame for the kids, but if it happens, it happens," Williams said Saturday. The bacteria traces back to human and animal fecal matter. It's washing up at beaches in Englewood, Palm Island, Port Charlotte and Boca Grande. "I'll go home and play with a hose before I get in there, you couldn't pay me to get in there," Williams said.

Health department officials say the surge in bacteria is likely linked to the recent heavy rainfall. Either way, many beach go-ers are being forced to take in the scene from a distance.

"I won't even touch it, I won't even walk my feet in there. I don't want that stuff on me," said Jeff Vincent, who was surprised by the signs during his visit to Port Charlotte beach on Saturday.

Still, some are ignoring the yellow warning signs lining the shore at Port Charlotte beach. They say they're taking their chances, in an effort to cool off from the summer sun.

"Nine times out of ten, not everybody's going to get sick from it. We just went in and had fun. Spent a few minutes in, few minutes out," said Rllan Wood, who took to the water despite the warnings.

The health department says normally, Mother Nature clears up the problem within one to two weeks. In the meantime, some swimmers just learning of the advisory say they're taking a break from the beach.

"That's disgusting. Ok, I don't think I'm going again then," said Zach Davenport, after learning about the water sample results.

For a complete list of Charlotte County beach water conditions, visit this link:

<http://esetappsdo.h.doh.state.fl.us/irm00beachwater/beachresults.aspx?county=Charlotte>