



Coastal Health District

Lawton C. Davis, M.D., District Health Director

1395 Eisenhower Drive
Savannah, Georgia 31406

Phone: 912-356-2441 | Fax: 912-356-2868

1602 Drayton Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Phone: 912-651-3378 (Adult Health)

Phone: 912-651-6252 (Child Health)

Fax: 912-651-6297

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Cristina Gibson

912.644.5818

Beach Advisory Issued for Polk Street Beach on Tybee Island

CHATHAM COUNTY, GA – The Chatham County Health Department has issued an advisory for Polk Street Beach (the northernmost part of Tybee Island at the mouth of the Savannah River from the end of the beach to the jetty) on Tybee Island.

This advisory is only for the area specified above and does not impact any other beaches on the island. There is no way of knowing if going into water that is under advisory will result in illness; however, this beach water advisory is to alert the public of a possible risk of illness associated with water contact. An area under advisory does not mean the beach is closed.

Water samples are tested only for enterococcus (pronounced: en·ter·o·coc·cus) bacteria which is found in warm blooded animals including humans but also birds, raccoons, deer, dolphins and other wildlife. It is difficult to determine exactly where the bacteria come from but some sources could include animal waste, storm water runoff, or boating waste. When a beach is under advisory, it means that the level of bacteria found in the water is above the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended standards.

The Chatham County Health Department recommends you do not swim or wade in the water in the area under advisory. Fish and other seafood caught from this area should be thoroughly washed with fresh water and thoroughly cooked before eating as should fish or seafood caught from any waters.

The area will be retested and the advisory will be lifted when tests show the bacteria levels meet the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended standards. For more information about beach water testing, go to www.gachd.org and click on the Environmental Health tab at the top of the page.

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We Protect Lives.