



Coastal Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Beach Advisory Issued on Tybee Island

CHATHAM COUNTY, GA – The Chatham County Health Department has issued a beach water advisory for Polk Street Beach on Tybee Island. Polk Street Beach is located on the north side of Tybee Island, from the end of the beach to the jetty.

This advisory is only for the area specified above and does not impact the other beach areas on the island. There is no way of knowing if going into water that is under advisory will result in illness. However, these beach water advisories are 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 collected throughout the year on Tybee Island. Samples are tested 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 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 re-tested, 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.