

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

MEDIA RELEASE

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**SUN AND SAND PLANS FOR THE FOURTH?
CHECK OUT BEACH WATER QUALITY REPORTS FIRST**



Healthy Beaches signs are posted at beach entrances. The one at right alerts beachgoers when enterococci levels are high.

If your Independence Day holiday plans include a visit to one of Florida’s beaches, you should know that the Department of Health’s Healthy Beaches Program monitors beach water quality for your safety.

Beach coordinators collect biweekly water samples throughout the year. The samples are analyzed for enterococci—organisms that are present in animal waste. (In high concentrations, enterococci may indicate that there are other organisms in the water that could cause disease, infections and rashes.)

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) tests beaches at nine sites along the Gulf Coast and Tampa Bay. Results are posted on its website

at <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-health/water-programs/healthy-beaches/index.html>. (The same site also has links to reports from beaches in other Florida counties.) The latest reports indicate there are no Pinellas beaches that require an advisory.

Based on guidelines from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), health advisories are issued when these organisms reach high levels. DOH-Pinellas posts advisories that recommend no swimming; it does not “close beaches.” Public notifications include results entered on the Healthy Beaches web page, signs posted at the beach, alerts sent to the media and to local governments. Health advisories are not lifted until samples collected show acceptable water quality. The health department also works closely with local governments and other agencies to investigate possible sources of the contaminant.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com.

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