

## News release

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### **Health advisories issued for water contact in three coastal locations: Sunset Bay, Mill Creek and Harris beaches**

Public health advisories were issued today due to higher-than-normal levels of bacteria in ocean waters at Sunset Bay Beach, Mill Beach and Harris Beach. Sunset Bay Beach is located in Coos County, and Mill and Harris beaches are located in Curry County.

Increased pathogen and fecal bacteria levels in ocean waters can come from both shore and inland sources, such as storm water runoff, sewer overflows, failing septic systems, and even animal waste from livestock, pets and wildlife.

Water samples indicate higher-than-normal levels of fecal bacteria, which can result in diarrhea, stomach cramps, skin rashes, upper respiratory infections and other illnesses. Direct contact with the surf or water running into the surf in these areas should be avoided until the advisories are lifted, especially for children and the elderly, who may be more vulnerable to waterborne bacteria.

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While these advisories are in effect at Sunset Bay, Mill and Harris beaches, visitors should avoid wading in nearby creeks or in discolored water, and stay clear of water runoff flowing into the ocean. Even if there is no advisory in effect, officials recommend avoiding swimming in the ocean within 48 hours after a rainstorm.

State officials advise that the status of water contact advisories at beaches is subject to change. For the most recent information on advisories, please visit the [Beach Monitoring Program](#) website or call 971-673-0400, or 877-290-6767 toll-free.

Although state officials discourage water contact, they continue to encourage other recreational activities on these beaches because they pose no health risk even during an advisory. Neighboring beaches are not affected by this advisory.

Since 2003, state officials have used a federal Environmental Protection Agency grant to monitor popular Oregon beaches and make timely reports to the public about elevated levels of fecal bacteria. Oregon state organizations participating in this program are Oregon Public Health, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. For more information, contact the [Beach Monitoring Program](#) website or call 971-673-0400, or 877-290-6767 toll-free.

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