



Update: 7/17/2019

These environmental conditions cannot be predicted for our guests future travel dates but at this time, we have not received any alerts or restrictions so encourage our guests to come and play on America's #1 Beach.

Despite it's name, Blue Green Algae is not an algae at all. It is a bacteria called cyanobacteria normally present in many lakes but also shows up in salt water. This bacteria thrives in warm, nutrient-rich water and when conditions are right, the bacteria can grow quickly forming "blooms". The blooms are described as looking like pea soup or spilled green paint. They can have a swampy odor when breaking down and can make humans and animals sick. If guests come into contact with this (by swallowing, skin contact or airborne) symptoms generally begin hours to 2 days after exposure and might result in vomiting, diarrhea, rash, eye irritation, cough, sore throat and headache. Blue Green Algae has been detected in Gulfport and Treasure Island but no warnings have been issued for Clearwater Beaches.

Flesh Eating Bacteria, or necrotizing fasciitis, is an infection that results in the death of parts of the body's soft tissue. It is a severe disease of sudden onset that spreads rapidly. Symptoms include red or purple skin in the affected area, severe pain, fever, and vomiting. There are several cases of this that have been contracted in Florida in places as close as Sarasota and Manatee Counties. You do not have to enter the water to contract though those most at risk tend to have open wounds or are immune compromised. There have been no direct restrictions placed locally on visiting our beaches or waterways at this time and it is considered safe to swim.

You may have noticed a recent increase in sea grass (or sargassum) on the beaches lately. This is a large belt that has traveled to the Florida Coast from across the Atlantic. While it is not harmful, there is a foul odor associated similar to rotten eggs. While this increase is likely to continue, it is separate and unrelated to either of the conditions outlined above.

Interactive Algal Bloom Dashboard:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDEP/bulletins/2470bbb>

Five things to know about Blue Green Algae: <https://www.tampabay.com/florida/2019/07/09/five-things-to-know-about-blue-green-algae-yeah-its-bad-and-its-getting-worse/>

Blue Green Q&A: <https://www.visitflorida.org/resources/crisis-preparation/blue-green-algae-information/>

Sargassum increase: <https://www.tampabay.com/environment/sargassum-seaweed-now-piling-up-on-florida-beaches-becoming-a-regular-belt-across-atlantic-to-africa-20190704/>

"Flesh Eating Bacteria" – Vibrio Vulnificus

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vibrio-infections/vibrio-vulnificus/index.html>

Red Tide

<https://myfwc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=87162eec3eb846218cec711d16462a72>

Blue/Green Algae

<https://floridadep.gov/algabloom>

Sargassum (Brown Seaweed)

http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/beach-water-quality/_documents/sargassum-factsheet-appr-final.pdf

Florida Bureau of Environmental Health, Water Programs

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