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HEALTH ADVISORY

Health Officials Issue Red Tide Advisory



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Pensacola, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (DOH-Escambia) reminds all people to protect themselves and their families against Florida Red Tide exposure. At this time, moderate to high levels of the Red Tide organism are predicted to be present in Escambia County's coastal waters from Friday, October 30, 2015 through Sunday, November 1, 2015.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), when the microscopic algae called *Karenia brevis* grow quickly, they can create blooms called Florida red tides that make the ocean appear red or brown. *K. brevis* produces powerful neurotoxins called brevetoxins, which can kill fish and other marine organisms. Florida red tides damage local fishing industries, shoreline quality, and local economies.

Some people who swim among brevetoxins or inhale brevetoxins dispersed in the air may experience irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, as well as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. People with existing respiratory illness, such as asthma, may experience these symptoms more severely.

Red tide does not affect everyone who comes into contact with it and usually symptoms end when a person leaves the area or goes indoors. Avoid exposure by not swimming or boating in these areas. Never eat dead fish or other animals found washed up on shorelines. **Health officials recommend that people experiencing these symptoms stay away from beach areas -- once a person leaves the red tide area, the symptoms usually go away. If symptoms do not subside, a person should contact their physician for assistance.**

There are no long-term health effects from being exposed to Red Tide.

General Health Information

- Not all people are susceptible to the effects of red tide.
- Susceptible people who come into contact with salt water spray may experience varying degrees of eye, nose, and throat irritation similar to cold symptoms.
- Health officials recommend that people experiencing these symptoms stay away from beach areas – once a person leaves the red tide area, the symptoms usually go away.
- Effects from contact with salt spray – such as eye, nose and throat irritation – are temporary, with no long-term health effects. (See precautions below on eating seafood.)
- A rash can sometimes occur after contact with affected water, and usually goes away within 24 hours.

The most current information on Red Tide in Florida can be found at myfwc.com/redtide

For more information about red tides, visit CDC's red tide Web site at cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab.

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The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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