

E. Coli Infections Possibly Linked to Lake Wildwood Beach – Additional Beaches Closed

By Nevada County Public Health Department -

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August 2, 2017 – As previously reported, there are E. Coli infections that are possibly linked to the Main Beach at Lake Wildwood in Commodore Park. The Nevada County Public Health Department (NCPHD) began receiving reports of sick children last Thursday, July 27th. As of today, NCPHD has received reports of nine young children who are ill, six of whom have been hospitalized, though two of the hospitalized children have been discharged home. Three of the hospitalized children have developed Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), which is a potentially life-threatening condition with anemia and kidney complications. Though HUS is a very serious condition, most people who are diagnosed with HUS recover fully. In addition, one adult closely associated with one of the symptomatic children has been diagnosed with Shiga toxin-producing E. coli.

The NCPHD and Nevada County Environmental Health Department continue to work closely on an active investigation of this outbreak. In cooperation with Lake Wildwood Association Management, the Environmental Health Department closed the Commodore Park beach on July 28th in an effort to ensure public health and safety. Preliminary test results from water samples taken near that beach were received on Saturday, July 29th, and the results warranted continued beach closure. (It can take up to 1-2 days to receive these preliminary results.) As an additional precautionary measure, NCPHD sent an advisory to all Lake Wildwood residents recommending no recreational swimming in the lake until additional beach areas were tested. NCPHD emphasized that this advisory was most critical for more vulnerable populations including young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems. In addition, Environmental Health Department staff

worked with the Lake Wildwood Association to post warnings and the NCPHD advisory at all of the lake's public beaches. The Lake Wildwood Association Management continues to cooperate and be responsive to multiple county departments in the efforts to prevent further illness.

At the request of the Environmental Health Department, the Department of Public Works collected water samples at Lake Wildwood. Samples were taken from the five public beaches along the lake near the shoreline, as the shoreline at the beach at Commodore Park is where all of the ill children were known to have played. Results from those samples were received late yesterday, August 1st, and three of the five public beaches (Commodore Park, Meadow Park, and Hideaway Park) had elevated levels of fecal coliforms, which are bacteria that can cause serious illness. The Environmental Health Department determined that the results warranted closures of all of the public beaches to mitigate any further health risk.

The Public Works Department tested for leaks in the sewer lines for the Lake Wildwood area by using an inert, non-toxic dye. The dye, green in color, will dissipate with exposure to direct sunlight within 24 hours. Residents may, however, notice waters that are coming out of the plant after treatment will have a rich green color.

Though various tests have been conducted, the source of the contamination has not yet been determined. The investigation continues and the lake water will be tested regularly at seven different locations near the beaches listed above. This testing will occur twice a week at the same seven locations until further notice. The beaches, therefore, will remain closed until further notice and the no swimming advisory remains in effect as well. The public pool remains open and no infections have been linked to the pool at this time.

The symptoms of Shiga toxin-producing E. coli include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), vomiting and sometimes fever. It can take up to ten days after exposure to develop symptoms, and most people recover within five

to ten days. "This illness is more dangerous in young children than healthy adults, and should be taken very seriously" said Dr. Ken Cutler, Nevada County Health Officer. "If you or a loved one experience these symptoms, please contact your health care provider right away. If there are complications such as dehydration or anemia, timely treatment can make a significant difference in your recovery." Moreover, anyone with these symptoms or caring for someone with these symptoms should wash their hands meticulously and frequently and should not prepare food for others. In addition, anyone who has experienced these symptoms should not attend daycare without clearance from a health care provider.

For more information about E.Coli, visit the California Department of Public Health's website located at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/E-coli-O157H7.aspx>.