COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stay Out of the Ocean During and After Significant Rainstorms

County Public Health advises avoiding ocean water for at least three days after heavy rain

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA. — The County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health is strongly advising community members and visitors to avoid contact with ocean water during significant rainstorms and for at least three days afterward.

This precaution is especially important following periods of heavy rainfall, when stormwater runoff can carry bacteria, viruses and other disease-causing organisms from streets, creeks and watersheds into the ocean.

Contact with contaminated ocean water can increase the risk of skin infections, respiratory illness and gastrointestinal illness. Young children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems may be more vulnerable to illness from waterborne pathogens.

Swimmers, surfers, waders and others should use extra caution after rain and avoid areas near:

- Creeks and rivers that flow into the ocean
- Storm drains and other runoff outlets
- Beaches and coastal areas where stormwater is visibly entering the ocean

Even when the water looks clean, disease-causing organisms may be present and cannot be seen. Waiting at least three days after significant rain helps reduce the risk of exposure to pollutants and disease-causing organisms carried by stormwater runoff.

Public Health routinely monitors coastal water quality and posts advisories when elevated bacteria levels are detected. Community members can check current beach water quality information before heading to the coast by visiting SurfSafeSLO for current and more information.

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