

April 5, 2016

HEALTH OFFICIALS IN HAMILTON, MADISON COUNTY ADVISE OF POSSIBLE WASTEWATER CONTAMINATION IN THE WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER

Possible Impacts from Valdosta, GA Wastewater Overflow



Contact:

DOH-Hamilton

Mark Lander

Mark.Lander@flhealth.gov

386-792-1414

DOH-Madison

Kim Allbritton

Kimberly.Allbritton@flhealth.gov

850-973-7140

Madison, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Hamilton and Madison counties today issued a joint health advisory to residents and visitors near the Withlacoochee River in north Florida. The city of Valdosta, Georgia has reported a spill made up of a combination of stormwater and untreated sewage that has overflowed into One Mile Branch, Sugar Creek and Two Mile Branch, which flow into the Withlacoochee River.

Until further information is known regarding possible contamination of the river, people in the area are urged to take precautions when in contact with the Withlacoochee River. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is conducting water sampling today.

Water contaminated with wastewater overflow presents several health risks to humans. Untreated human sewage with microbes could cause gastrointestinal issues and other conditions.

Anyone who comes into contact with the river water should wash thoroughly, especially before eating or drinking. Children and older adults, as well as people with weakened immune systems, are particularly vulnerable to disease so every precaution should be taken if in contact with the river water.

For more information about the potential health effects of wastewater overflow, Floridians are encouraged to contact DOH-Hamilton at 386-758-1059 or www.hamilton.floridahealth.gov and DOH-Madison at 850-973-5000 or visit www.madison.floridahealth.gov.

About the Florida Department of Health

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

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.