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Tips for Avoiding Negative Health Impacts from Oiled Shores

OKALOOSA – As the oil from the Deepwater Horizon spill gets closer to Okaloosa County, the Okaloosa County Health Department provides the following tips for avoiding negative health impacts from an oiled shoreline to our residents and visitors:

- Avoid entering areas where oil can be seen or smelled (no wading, swimming or entering the water).
- Avoid direct skin contact with oil, oil-contaminated water and sediments.
- Avoid contact with dead or dying fish or other aquatic life.
- Do not swim or ski in areas affected by the oil spill, and if traveling through the area by boat take precautions when hoisting the boat anchor. If oil makes contact with the skin, wash it off with soap and water.
- Do not fish in oil spill-affected waters.
- Do not harvest or eat dead fish, fish with oily residue, or fish that have a petroleum odor.
- Avoid boating through oil slicks or sheens.
- Young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and individuals with underlying respiratory conditions should avoid the area.
- Prevent pets from entering oil-contaminated areas.
- Those near Florida's Gulf Coast may detect an odor because of the oil spill. Some people are more sensitive to these odors and may experience nasal irritation and feelings of nausea. In combination with seasonal allergies, such as sensitivity to pollen, or pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, some people may experience more severe symptoms.
- Individuals experiencing respiratory symptoms that are aggravated by the odors from the oil spill should consider:
 - Staying indoors in air-conditioning and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity.
 - If symptoms do not improve, contact a primary care physician or other health care provider for medical advice.
 - Individuals who have pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma or other respiratory illnesses should contact their healthcare professional if feeling symptomatic.

For more information visit: http://www.HealthyOkaloosa.com/Deepwater_Horizon.

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