County of Santa Cruz

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Press Release

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CAPITOLA BEACH CLOSED DUE TO E. COLI RISK

CAPITOLA, CA — The County of Santa Cruz and City of Capitola are announcing the temporary closure of Capitola Beach as public health officials investigate an outbreak of a potentially serious strain of E. coli that has sickened nine children across the Bay Area.

Santa Cruz County Public Health Division has been notified of nine cases of E. coli O157 infection. Four cases involve Santa Cruz County residents, while five involve residents of other Bay Area counties. All nine cases are linked, indicating a common source or related exposures.

The source of the outbreak remains unknown, and public health officials have determined all exposures likely occurred at Capitola Beach or in surrounding waterways.

As a precaution, and at the recommendation of Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer, the City of Capitola is temporarily closing Capitola Beach while the investigation continues. The closure is intended to reduce potential exposure while officials gather additional information.

Environmental sampling has been conducted at four locations in and around Soquel Creek and Capitola Beach, including an upstream location near Nob Hill, the jetty, Soquel Creek Lagoon and the flume where water enters Monterey Bay. Additional E. coli testing is planned as the investigation continues.

Residents and visitors are advised to:

- Stay out of the water within the posted closure area.
- Avoid drinking untreated water from creeks, lagoons or other natural waterbodies.
- Avoid swimming with open wounds and shower after contact with natural waterways.
- Keep pets out of potentially contaminated water and provide them with clean drinking water.

- Follow posted closure signs and public health advisories.

About E. coli O157

E. coli O157 can cause severe gastrointestinal illness, including diarrhea that may be bloody, abdominal cramps and vomiting. Some infections can lead to serious complications, particularly among young children.

Anyone experiencing concerning symptoms should contact a health care provider. People with bloody diarrhea or signs of dehydration should seek prompt medical attention.

The County and City are coordinating closely with California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control. The beach will remain closed pending further assessment, and the public will be notified when conditions allow it to reopen.

For more information:

- For more information about reducing exposure to germs in recreational water, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Swimming guidance.
- Find local water quality updates, visit the County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health Division's webpage at scceh.org/WaterQualityMonitoring.

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