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US Beaches Forced To Close Because Of Toxic Bacteria



(Photo by Sandy Huffaker/Getty Images)

Bacterial infections are causing beaches across the country to close, Fox News reported on Tuesday.

Beaches in New York, Ohio, New Jersey, Washington state and Massachusetts were forced to close down to prevent swimmers from entering the water and exposing themselves to harmful bacteria, a new study showed.

Environment Massachusetts, the organization that conducted the study, discovered that of the 556 beaches it researched, 264 were deemed unsafe for swimming at least one day of last year, while 29 beaches were categorized as unsafe for at least 25% of the days in which they were tested.

Beaches were categorized as potentially unsafe “if fecal indicator bacteria levels exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s ‘Beach Action Value’ associated with an estimated illness rate of 32 out of every 1,000 swimmers,” according to the report. Data was collected from beaches in 29 states and Puerto Rico.

Critics say the study puts too much emphasis on the testing.

“Though it makes a good headline, it is hyperbolic to suggest that swimming on 264 out of 457 beaches in Massachusetts poses a threat to human health because they may have failed one water quality test in 2020 after a summer rain,” said Chris Mancini, executive director of Save The Harbor/Save The Bay, an organization critical of the study.

The issue of fecal contamination can cause health issues upon human contact, the report stipulated. Such interactions make beaches unsafe for swimming. When contact with contaminated water occurs, it can cause health issues such as gastrointestinal illness as well as respiratory disease, ear and eye infection, and skin rash, the report said. There are an estimated 57 million cases of recreational waterborne illness annually from swimming in contaminated bodies of water, according to the report.