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



### Elevated indicators of fecal bacteria

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**Madison, FL** – The Florida Department of Health in Hamilton and Madison counties today issued a joint health alert to residents and visitors near the Withlacoochee River in North Florida.

Until further information is known regarding possible bacterial contamination of the river, residents and visitors in the area are urged to take precautions when in contact with the Withlacoochee River. The Florida Department of Health is conducting water sampling. The results can be viewed on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection site: [Floridadep.gov/dear/watershed-monitoring-section/content/suwannee-river-basin-sampling-locations](http://Floridadep.gov/dear/watershed-monitoring-section/content/suwannee-river-basin-sampling-locations)

Water contaminated with elevated fecal bacteria presents several health risks to humans. Microbes normally found with fecal bacteria 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 [hamilton.floridahealth.gov](http://hamilton.floridahealth.gov) and DOH-Madison at 850-973-5000 or visit [madison.floridahealth.gov](http://madison.floridahealth.gov).

### About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://PublicHealthAccreditationBoard.org), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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