

Additional Resources

Beach Status

www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/doc/2931/542551/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oil Spill Page

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/gulfoilspill2010/>

Heat-Related Illness

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.asp>

Marine Animal Stings

www.dadehealth.org/downloads/Stings%20and%20Things%20Florida%20Poison%20Information%20Center-Miami.pdf

NPS Oil Spill Page (Public)

www.nps.gov/aboutus/oil-spill-response.htm

NPS Oil Spill Page (Internal)

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?lv=3&prg=1006>

Oil Spills and Health Issues

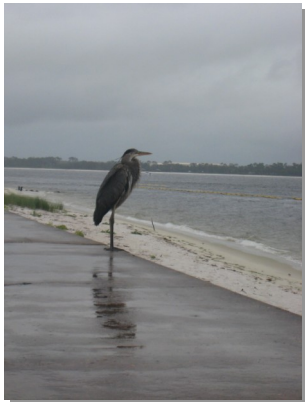
<http://disasterinfo.nlm.nih.gov/dimrc/oilspills.html#a3>

Tick-Borne Diseases

www.cdc.gov/ticks/prevention.html

West Nile Virus

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnv_factsheet.htm



Un-oiled Great Blue Heron at Fort Pickens, Gulf Islands National Seashore. NPS photo.

Contact information

CDC Hotline:

- 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

State Oil Spill Hotlines:

- 888-337-3569 (Florida Oil Spill Information Line)
- 866-519-6362 (Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Hotline)
- 866-448-5816 (Louisiana Environment/Community Hotline)

Public health related questions regarding the oil spill should be directed to:

CDR David Wong, MD
Chief, Epidemiology Branch
National Park Service
Office of Public Health
Ph: 505-248-7806
Email: David_Wong@nps.gov
- or -
CAPT Theresa McDarmont
Southeast Region Public Health Consultant
National Park Service
Office of Public Health
Ph: 404-507-5730
Email: Theresa_McDarmont@nps.gov

Health related questions specific to employees should be directed to:

LCDR Michael Quinn
Occupational Health Manager
National Park Service
Risk Management Division
Ph: 202-513-7214
Email: Michael_M_Quinn@nps.gov

This document is a collaboration between the National Park Service Office Public Health and Division of Risk Management.



Oil Spill Human Health and Safety Information

On April 20, 2010, an explosion aboard the Deepwater Horizon offshore oil rig caused oil to spill on the Gulf of Mexico.

The mix of diesel fuel and crude oil that is currently spilling into the Gulf of Mexico contains chemicals that potentially can affect human health. Young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and individuals with underlying respiratory conditions should avoid the area and/or stay indoors.

Primary risk to human health associated with crude oil exposure is:

- Direct contact with oil;
- Inhalation of airborne chemicals or particulates; and
- Ingestion of oil-contaminated water or seafood.

Information in this brochure outlines ways to minimize and respond to exposure of the oil spill and other human health and safety issues relevant to recreating and working in National Park Service units in the Gulf Coast and South Florida.

The National Park Service is a part of a coordinated national response effort to protect the health and safety of park visitors and employees.



A boat deploying a stack of boom near Fort Pickens, Gulf Islands National Seashore. NPS photo.

Health and Safety Information for National Park Service Visitors and Employees

General Health Advice in Areas Affected by the Oil Spill

- Avoid direct skin contact with oil, oil-contaminated water, dispersants, and sediments. Brief contact can cause skin irritation and allergic reactions in some people. Prolonged skin contact with crude oil and petroleum products can cause skin reddening, swelling, and burning. Effects can be worsened by exposure to the sun.
- Avoid oil contact with your eyes. It can cause stinging and temporary redness.
- Avoid swimming, skiing, or boating in areas affected by the oil spill. Check the beach status before your visit (see *Additional Resources* panel).
- Do not eat dead fish, fish with an oily residue, or fish that have a petroleum odor.
- Be aware of and reduce exposure to other health risks associated with the Gulf Coast.

More information on how to protect yourself for the following conditions can be found on the *Additional Resources* panel:

- Mosquito and tick-borne diseases
- Heat-related illness
- Contact with stinging animals (e.g., snakes, poisonous fishes, jellyfish) and toxic plants
- Food or water-borne diseases (e.g., Salmonella, Vibrio)

What Should I Do If I Come into Contact with Oil?

- If oil contacts the skin, it can be washed with:
 - ♦ Soap and water
 - ♦ Baby oil
 - ♦ Petroleum jelly
 - ♦ Cleaning paste such as those sold at auto parts stores
- If oil gets in your eyes, immediately flush the eye with water for 15 minutes. Contacts should be removed prior to rinse.
- If you swallow small amounts (less than a cup) of oil, it may cause an upset stomach, vomiting, and/or diarrhea; however, long-term effects are unlikely. Avoid vomiting to prevent oil from getting into the lungs. Exposure to oil through ingestion and related concerns can be reported to the Poison Control Center at 1800-222-1222.

How will the Oil Spill Affect Air Quality?

Inhalation of vapors from fresh crude oil can cause headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea, or vomiting. Inhalation of weathered crude oil is of less concern since volatile hydrocarbons have evaporated. Leaving the immediate area for another area with clearer air may help relieve symptoms.

Individuals who experience respiratory symptoms that are aggravated by odors from the oil spill should consider staying indoors, avoiding strenuous outdoor activity, and contacting a healthcare professional.



Dry Tortugas National Park. NPS photo.

How will the Oil Spill Affect Seafood Quality?

The two main concerns regarding seafood consumption is the presence of petroleum on seafood making it unpalatable and unfit for consumption, and the presence of poly aromatic hydrocarbons. Fish or seafood that smells of fuel when raw or cooked should not be eaten.

How will the Oil Spill Affect Water Quality?

Drinking water supplies are not expected to be impacted. Odor and taste properties of water would cause drinking water to be unacceptable at concentrations significantly lower than levels that cause human health concerns.

Incidental or intentional swallowing of water contaminated with oil while swimming is more of a concern.

How will Dispersants in the Water Impact my Health?

Dispersants are chemical mixtures that break the oil down into smaller droplets. Brief contact with small amounts of dispersants is not thought to be harmful. However, longer contact with it can cause eye, nose, and throat irritation. It can also cause a rash and/or dry skin.

How do Tar Balls Impact my Health?

Tar balls are fragments of weathered oil that have congealed, forming sticky balls. Although occasional, brief contact with tar balls is not thought to cause harm, people who are more sensitive to chemicals may develop an allergic reaction such as a rash from even a brief contact with it. Avoid direct contact with tar balls if possible.