

[Eric Kepf, Environmental Health Specialist] "We're gonna go down to the beach. We're going to take some water samples"

[Stefany Strong, Reporter] "Eric Kepf is off to the beach." He boasts of having one of the best jobs in Volusia County. He's an Environmental Health Specialist for the Volusia County Health Department tasked with sampling beach water as part of the State's Healthy Beaches Program."

[Eric Kepf, Environmental Health Specialist] "Oh it's definitely a fun job to get out here to the beach every morning right before it's getting too hot, sunny, nice scenery."

[Stefany Strong, Reporter] "You may all agree that the beach is a great place to hang out, to take a walk along the shore, to have a great day of family fun but what you may not realize is that the beach is also being monitored to make sure the water is safe."

[Chip Schelble, Environmental Health Supervisor] "The water quality in Volusia County generally is good. We have some seasonal fluctuations in the winter and spring when we have very large flocks of migratory birds on the beaches and they're sort of in the central Daytona areas and that we'll see that characteristically in January through March".

[Stefany Strong, Reporter] "On this day it's before 8 AM at the Silver Beach Approach. Eric and two environmental health interns, Ernastine Langley and Jamen Patel roll up their shorts to enter the calm ocean and the water sampling begins"

[Eric Kepf, Environmental Health Specialist] "What we do is we just take two of these 100 ML whirlpack bags we take them down to the beach and we basically go about knee deep into the water and we take a sample. We take the top off of the bag, we take it and we dip it down into the water and we take a sample, whirl it up and we put it in a cooler."

[Stefany Strong, Reporter] "Fecal coliform and enterococcus are both enteric bacteria that normally inhabit the intestinal track of humans and animals. The presence of enteric bacteria is an indication of fecal pollution which may come from stormwater run off, pets, wildlife, and human sewage."

[Chip Schelble, Environmental Health Supervisor] "Well if the bacteria is present you want to know so you can advise people to use another location to avoid a certain area for the time being while the contamination might exist. Some areas never have any contamination what so ever. Others do seasonally. Others are tied to rainfall, not so much in Volusia County, but in other parts of the state and country and it's good to be able to advise people because these can be a significant health hazard if they exist"

[Stefany Strong, Reporter] Swimmers like Russ Gaumer from Daytona Beach enjoy the water and say he wants to know whether or not it is safe for swimming"

[Russ Gaumer, Daytona Beach] I know sometimes we have some waste that goes in there and you have to be very careful about that. Some of the boats out there drop stuff and I

am sure our sewage system isn't the best in the world too, so [laughs] That's why we should always check

[Stefany Strong, Reporter] Swimming advisories are posted on the beach if bacteria levels are higher than allowed. For more information about the health beaches program, please visit www.volusiahealth.com. For Volusia Magazine and on behalf of the Volusia County Health Department, Your Guide To Better Health, I'm Stefany Strong.