



RED TIDE

TOP 10 RED TIDE FACTS:

1. Harmful algal blooms (HABs), commonly referred to as red tide, occur worldwide and are caused by microscopic algae (plant-like microorganisms).
2. At high concentrations (known as blooms), algae may discolor the water — sometimes red, green or brown.
3. In Florida, red tide is caused by a naturally occurring alga called *Karenia brevis* or *K. brevis*.
4. *K. brevis* is found almost exclusively in the Gulf of Mexico, yet sometimes has been found along the U.S. east coast from Florida to North Carolina.
5. The organism produces toxins that can affect the central nervous systems of fish, birds, mammals and other animals.
6. Seafood from grocery stores, restaurants and hotels comes from areas that are monitored for red tide. (*See reverse.*)
7. Blooms of *K. brevis* can irritate the skin, eyes and throat. They can also affect the breathing of some people. (*See more about health effects on reverse.*)
8. A bloom can last days, weeks or months and its location can change daily due to wind conditions and water currents.
9. No single factor causes blooms of *K. brevis*. Blooms form as a result of interactions between biology (the organisms), chemistry (natural or man-made nutrients for growth) and physics (the currents that unite nutrients with light and carry red tide to the beach).
10. Up-to-date information on Florida HABs and *K. brevis* can be readily found online. (*See below.*)

If you have a health-related question about red tide, please call the
Sarasota County Contact Center at: **941-861-5000** or
Florida Poison Control Information Center at: **1-800-222-1222**

Health Info: www.floridahealth.gov

Report Fish Kills: 1-800-636-0511 [FWC]

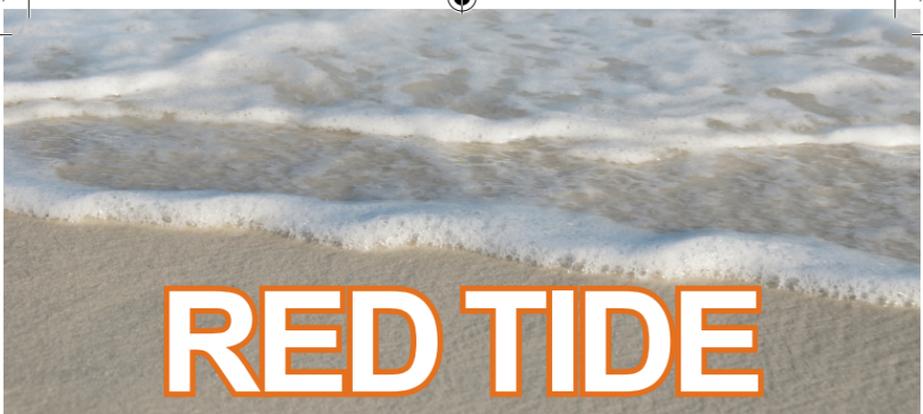
Red Tide Info & Status Reports: www.myfwc.com/redtide

Red Tide Facts: www.start1.org

Current Beach Conditions: www.visitbeaches.org
or call 1-941-BEACHES (232-2437)

Shellfish Harvest Area Status: www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Harvesting-Area-Classification/Harvesting-Management

Bloom Tracking: www.ocgweb.marine.usf.edu/hab_tracking/HAB_trajectories.html



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HEALTH TIPS:

1. Most people can swim in red tide, yet it can cause skin irritation, throat irritation and burning eyes. If your skin is easily irritated, avoid swimming during blooms. If you experience irritation, get out and thoroughly wash off with fresh water. Swimming near dead fish is not recommended.
2. Pets may become ill if they swim during red tide blooms and then lick their fur or paws. Do not allow them to eat fish or drink the water from areas where these blooms are present.
3. Check the marine forecast. When winds are blowing onshore, people are more likely to feel eye, nose and throat irritation. These symptoms usually go away on their own. Taking over the counter antihistamines and wearing a particle filter mask may lessen your symptoms. Going inside an air conditioned space also helps.
4. People with severe asthma or chronic lung conditions should avoid areas with active red tides. If symptoms continue, seek medical attention.

SEAFOOD SAFETY TIPS:

1. Commercial seafood found in grocery stores, restaurants and other commercial outlets comes from areas that are monitored.
2. Recreational fishers must be careful:
 - Do not eat mollusks (clams, oysters or mussels) taken from red tide waters, as they may contain toxins that cause a food poisoning called NSP (Neurotoxic Shellfish Poisoning). Visit <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Harvesting-Area-Classification/Harvesting-Management> for current conditions of shellfish harvesting areas.
 - The fillets from healthy finfish can be eaten.
 - Edible parts of other shellfish (crabs, shrimp and lobsters) are not affected by red tide and can be eaten. Do not eat the tamale (green stuff / hepatopancreas).
 - Use common sense: harvesting distressed or dead animals is not advised under any circumstances.



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