



345 6th Street, Suite 300
Bremerton, WA 98312
kitsappublichealth.org

Media Release

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CONTACT: Shawn Ultican
360-337-5622
shawn.ultican@kitsappublichealth.org

Combined Sewer Overflow Impacts Port Washington Narrows and Sinclair Inlet

Health District Issues Health Advisory through July 2, 2013

BREMERTON, WA—The City of Bremerton today reported a 12,969 gallon combined sewer overflow --- a diluted mixture of untreated sewage and storm water --- into Port Washington Narrows and Sinclair Inlet. As a result of the overflow, the Health District has issued a seven-day health advisory for all of Port Washington Narrows and Sinclair Inlet. Health District staff are posting warning signs at public access beaches in the area.

The spill was caused by heavy rains yesterday evening. Under these conditions, the storm water system functioned as designed, discharging excess flow into the marine water to prevent the back up of sewage into individual homes and businesses.

During the advisory, the public is advised to avoid contact with water in Port Washington Narrows and Sinclair Inlet, and not harvest shellfish from beaches in the area. Bacteria and viruses from sewage spilled into the water increase the risk of people getting sick. Contact with waters contaminated with fecal bacteria can result in intestinal illness including nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Other illnesses such as skin rashes or upper respiratory infections can also occur. Children and the elderly may be more vulnerable to waterborne illnesses.

To reduce risk of illness after coming in contact with polluted water, the public is strongly encouraged to wash their hands after handling contaminated items, and before eating or preparing food.

The Health District also recommends not harvesting shellfish anywhere in Kitsap County during and following heavy rain events due to the increased risk of illness related to sewage pathogens.

This advisory is scheduled to be lifted the evening of Tuesday, July 2nd.

For additional information on this advisory, please contact Shawn Ultican, Environmental Health Specialist with the Water Pollution Identification and Correction Program, at 360-337-5622.

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