

# ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

ADPH issues precautions related to Gulf oil spill

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The Gulf of Mexico oil spill has prompted the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) to prepare for the issuance of health advisories in the event they are warranted. The ADPH may close the oyster beds in Alabama as a result of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico which could affect the oyster beds and the shellfish. Advisories will be posted where necessary in specific bodies of water contaminated by oil.

“We are working to obtain up-to-date information as a public health priority, and we will provide additional reports as more information becomes available,” said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. In the interim, please consider the following:

### **1. Odor**

If you are close to the Gulf Coast you may detect an odor as a result of the oil spill. Some people also may be sensitive to any change in air quality, which could cause symptoms such as lightheadedness, nausea, vomiting or headaches. If you have these symptoms, authorities recommend you consider staying indoors, ventilating your home with air conditioning, and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity. If these symptoms do not improve, you should then consider contacting your primary care physician or other health care provider for medical advice. If you have pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma or other respiratory illness, you should consider communicating with your physician if you feel symptomatic.

### **2. Food Advisories**

- If a fish smells or tastes like oil, do not eat it.
- Wash hands before eating.

### **3. Protective Measures**

The following protective measures should be taken if you are in the area of the Gulf oil spill:

- Avoid direct contact with the oil.

- If you get oil or tar balls on your skin, wash with soap and water.
- Launder articles of clothing as usual if you get oil on them.
- There is no need to use harsh detergents, solvents or other chemicals to wash oil from skin or clothing, and it is discouraged.

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