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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rain Advisory

(SANTA BARBARA, CA) - Rainfall brings health risks associated with storm water runoff. Storm water is untreated rain water that flows through the drain system into creeks, the ocean, and other waterways. With the recent Thomas Fire, fire debris and other materials may also be included in storm water runoff. Studies indicate that contact with storm water may increase the risk for certain types of illnesses such as rashes, fever, chills, ear infections, vomiting, and diarrhea. All untreated water should be considered as potentially contaminated.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and United States Environmental Protection Agency recommend that people avoid contact with floodwater due to potentially elevated levels of contamination with raw sewage and other toxic or hazardous substances that may be present.

- Avoid contact or limit contact with flood water
- Wash hands frequently with soap, especially before eating or drinking
- Do not allow children to play in flood water
- Report cuts, open wounds, and any signs of illness to your healthcare provider
- Keep vaccinations current

Unlike the municipal sewer system, water carried by the storm drain system is not treated. To minimize potential health risks, it is recommended that people do not swim, play, or surf in the ocean, creeks, and standing waters for at least three days following a rain event. If people do choose to have direct contact with storm water during the rain or immediately following the rain, they should avoid areas near the outfall from drainpipes and creeks that enter the ocean. Beachgoers should also avoid discolored water, as this may indicate high pollutant levels.

To find out what's being done to improve water quality and how you can help, visit www.sbprojectcleanwater.org

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