

Surfers at Imperial Beach urged to receive hepatitis vaccines because of pollution

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Surfers will brave almost anything to catch a few good waves, including pollution.

San Diego's Imperial Beach is one of the most polluted surf spots in the United States because of runoff from the sewage-laden Tijuana River.

(With the murder and dismemberment rate so high these days along Mexico's border area, it's possible that bodies or body parts also have been flushed into the area via the river.)

Yet surfers, being surfers, paddle out anyway, despite serious health risks and a permanent warning sign posted on the beach.

With this in mind, the Imperial Beach-based [WildCoast](#), a nonprofit environmental group, organized an event held over the weekend. It involved signing about 50 surfers up for free hepatitis-A vaccines at the [Imperial Beach Health Center](#).

The weekend event was in partnership with the health center and [San Diego State University's Graduate School of Public Health](#).

Wildcoast's Ben McCue said those who wish to receive a free vaccination should contact him via email at Benjamin@wildcoast.net or phone the health center at (619) 429-3733.

Clearly, Wildcoast has found this type of outreach program more effective than trying to talk people out of surfing when the waves are pumping, because that tactic simply does not work.

-- Pete Thomas

Photo: Surfers at Imperial Beach are urged to receive a free hepatitis-A vaccine to stem the risk of surfing at the polluted break near the U.S-Mexico border. Credit: Wildcoast