

Chemical spill had 'no impact on health': Costa Rica

May 4 2015



A Costa Rican coast guard boat monitors the beach in Puntaren on May 3, 2015

Costa Rica said Monday there was no health impact from a shipwreck that spilled ammonium nitrate off its coast, but maintained a fishing ban even as it reopened beaches.

Authorities declared a red alert for the beaches around Puntarenas, a Pacific port popular with cruise liners, after the ship sank in rough seas Saturday while carrying 180 tons of the chemical, which is used in

fertilizer and explosives, and can cause vomiting and seizures.

But Deputy Health Minister Maria Esther Anchia said the alert was preventive and that officials had now determined the waters were safe for swimming.

"There has been no impact on people's health," she told local radio station Monumental.

"The product dilutes very quickly."

No hospitals have reported patients admitted for [ammonium nitrate](#) poisoning, she said.

But the National Emergency Commission (CNE) maintained a ban on fishing in the area while it assesses the impact on marine life, a process it said takes about 72 hours.

Puntarenas sits 90 kilometers (55 miles) west of the capital San Jose and is a popular spot for beach getaways.

It is a gateway to the Pacific region for many cruise ships.

Costa Rica has a thriving tourism industry built around its pristine [beaches](#) and the stunning biodiversity of its tropical forests.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Chemical spill had 'no impact on health': Costa Rica (2015, May 4) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-05-chemical-impact-health-costa-rica.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.