



Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities



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To: Local Media Outlets

From: Environmental Health Services Division, Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD)

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RE: Public Bathing Beach Monitoring Program

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Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) is conducting a bathing beach monitoring program of public beaches in the six-county district, which includes Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties. This swimming season will be the 22nd consecutive year CMDHD will be monitoring select public beaches. It is also the seventh year in partnership with the Midland County Health Department to assist in monitoring select Midland County beaches. Monitoring consists of weekly water sampling and testing for E. coli, posting results on the State's BeachGuard website, and posting advisories at beaches with elevated E. coli results. Testing beaches during the swimming season is important to make sure the public is informed of high E. coli levels that pose a greater risk of illness. Beaches posted with an advisory should not be used for swimming until further testing show bacteria levels are within acceptable levels.

Surface water contaminated with elevated levels of E. coli bacteria can result in illness, with symptoms including nausea, vomiting, stomachache, diarrhea, headache, and fever. Other illnesses associated with swimming in contaminated waters include ear, eye, nose and throat infections, skin rashes, and skin infections, which can be serious. In highly polluted waters, swimmers run the risk of exposure to more serious disease-causing organisms, such as Cryptosporidium, Giardia, E. coli STEC, Norovirus, and Shigella.

Beaches that are open to the public but not part of a monitoring program - including smaller beaches, campgrounds, and children's camps - have been asked by the health department to either implement a water sampling program that meets the State standards or post notices at the beaches to inform the public whether the water has been tested for E. coli bacteria. Public beaches which are not being monitored for E. coli are required to post a sign stating they are not being monitored.

Summer days spent at Michigan public beaches are fun and can be done safely by following a few simple rules:

Please visit us online at www.cmdhd.org.

- If there has been a heavy rain event within the past 48 hours, avoid swimming due to runoff and likely higher levels of bacteria in the water. Avoid waters that are unusually cloudy or muddy after rain. Rivers often have elevated E. coli levels after heavy rainfall.
- Large amounts of waterfowl present (geese, ducks) or gulls could mean an increased amount of bird droppings that contain high concentrations of E. coli bacteria. Lakes with a large duck population may also pose a higher risk of swimmer's itch.
- Do not swim in lakes, ponds, or rivers if you have open sores or lesions on your body to avoid infection.
- Research into the number of closings the beach has had in recent years. Check [CMDHD's Public Beach Monitoring](#) for this information or Michigan's BeachGuard website www.egle.state.mi.us/beach.
- If the water is discolored with a greenish, blue, or milky appearance, this may indicate a harmful algal bloom (HAB). Certain algal blooms can produce toxins that could make someone ill. Do not swim in these areas and keep pets from drinking the water. Suspected algal blooms can be reported by sending an email to AlgaeBloom@Michigan.gov. More information can be found on [EGLE's HAB page](#).
- Do not swim where the beach has an abundance of trash and litter.
- Dry off immediately with a clean towel after getting out of the water. Do not forget to use sunscreen and take precautions against sunburn. It is also a good idea to take a shower after spending a day at the beach.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before eating.

For more information on the beach monitoring program and results, log onto our website at www.cmdhd.org and click on [Public Beach Monitoring](#).

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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