

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

For Immediate Release

York Region begins 2008 Beach Sampling Program

NEWMARKET – During hot weather, beaches provide a fun way to cool off and spend time with family and friends. The Regional Municipality of York Community and Health Services Department monitors water quality at York Region's public beaches during the summer months to ensure water quality is safe for swimming. The 2008 York Region Beach Sampling Program has officially begun.

From mid-June until the end of August, a minimum of five water samples are collected and tested weekly. Below is a list of public beaches in York Region that are currently being sampled:

Town of Georgina (Lake Simcoe)

- Claredon Beach
- Balfour Beach
- De La Salle Beach
- Franklin Beach
- Holmes Point
- Island Grove
- Jackson's Point
- Keswick Beach
- North Gwillimbury Park
- Glenwoods Beach
- Peninsula Motel Beach
- Port Bolster Beach
- Willow Beach
- Willow Wharf Dock

Town Of Whitchurch-Stouffville (Musselman's Lake)

- Cedar Beach

Township of King

- Recreation Island, Seneca College

When high levels of bacteria are detected in the water, York Region public health posts a warning sign advising the public that it is unsafe to swim.

To find information on your favourite beach or for more information about the Beach Sampling Program, please contact York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653.

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

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Attachment: York Region 2008 Beach Sampling Program Backgrounder



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NEWMARKET – The Regional Municipality of York Community and Health Services Department monitors water quality at various public bathing beaches in York Region during the summer months to ensure water quality is safe for swimming.

From mid-June until the end of August, a minimum of five water samples are collected and tested weekly from various York Region beaches. Permanent metal signs advising the public whether or not the water is safe for swimming are found at each of the beaches sampled by York Region. Below are pictures of and explanations for the types of signs that may be posted:

<p>Blue Sign</p> <p>This sign indicates that it is safe to swim in the water unless there has been a heavy rainfall within the last 48 hours. Bacteria levels in the water tend to increase after a heavy rainfall and may pose a risk to your health.</p>	
<p>Red sign</p> <p>This sign indicates that the level of bacteria in the water is high enough to cause a greater risk of illness and may pose a risk to your health.</p> <p>High levels of bacteria can cause skin, ear, eye, nose and throat infections, as well as stomach disorders.</p> <p>York Region advises that you do not go into the water when you see this sign.</p>	

There are many factors that contribute to higher levels of bacteria in our beach water, including:

- Seasonal and storm surface run-off into rivers and lakes
- Agriculture manure and feedlot run-off
- Domestic pet waste run-off
- Sewer overflows and malfunctioning private sewage disposal system
- Large population of waterfowl
- Warm water temperatures
- Boating waste

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Below is a list of tips to help keep local beaches open and safe for swimming:

- Avoid attracting animals or birds to beaches by feeding them
- Avoid the water if you have an infection or open wound
- If you own a pet, please observe local "stoop and scoop" bylaws and remove their waste from city streets, public parks and private property
- Practice pollution-free boating by disposing of human wastes hygienically
- If you are planning an addition to your home, contact your local building department to ensure that plumbing fixtures are properly connected to municipal sanitary sewer pipes or your private sewage disposal system
- Upgrade and keep in good working order your private sewage disposal system
- In agricultural communities, fence livestock away from streams and provide them with alternate water sources
- Ensure that run-off from feedlots and manure piles is properly maintained

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