

What is polluting our beaches?

There are many factors that contribute to polluted beach water including:

- Large populations of waterfowl
- Seasonal and storm surface run-off into rivers and lakes
- Sewer overflows
- Agricultural manure and feedlot run-off
- Malfunctioning private sewage disposal systems
- Boating waste

How can you help?

- Do not attract animals or birds to beaches by feeding them
- If you own a pet, please observe local "stoop and scoop" by-laws and remove their waste from city streets, public parks and private property
- 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
- 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
- Upgrade and keep in good working order your private sewage disposal system
- Practice pollution-free boating by disposing of human wastes safely
- Avoid using fertilizers and pesticides
- Do not pour hazardous waste (paints, thinners, oils) down the drain

For more information about the Beach sampling program or to find out if your favorite beach is safe for swimming, contact York Region Health Services *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 or visit www.york.ca



A Guide to Help You Choose a Safe Bathing Beach



WATER SAFETY AT THE BEACH

During the summer months, visiting a beach in York Region may be an option to cool off and spend time at the beach with family and friends.

This pamphlet provides you with information to ensure your visit to the beach is a safe and healthy one.



Why is beach water tested?

York Region Health services monitors water quality at York Region's public beaches during the summer months to ensure that the water is safe for swimming. From mid June until the end of August, a minimum of five water samples are collected weekly from each beach listed below.

Which beaches are tested?

Town of Georgina (Lake Simcoe beaches)

- 1 Glenwoods Beach
- 2 Claredon Beach
- 3 Keswick Beach
- 4 Balfour Beach
- 5 North Gwillimbury
- 6 Island Grove
- 7 Paradise / Willow Beach
- 8 Willow Wharf Dock
- 9 Franklin Beach
- 10 De La Salle Beach
- 11 Jackson's Point Beach
- 12 Holmes Point
- 13 Peninsula Motel
- 14 Port Bolster



Township of King

Recreation Island at Seneca College

Town of Richmond Hill

Sunset Beach (Lake Wilcox)

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Cedar Beach (Musselman's Lake)

Private Beach Associations that wish to conduct their own sampling can make arrangements by calling York Region Health Services *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653.

LAKE SIMCOE



How will I know it is safe to swim in the water?

York Region posts signs at the beach advising the public whether it is safe or unsafe to swim. These permanent metal signs are located in central locations at the beach and are blue or red in colour.

What do the signs mean?



Red sign – Unsafe to swim

This sign means that water is unsafe for swimming. This is because the level of E.coli (a dangerous bacteria) in the water is high enough to cause a greater risk of illness, and is unsafe for swimming. Your Region Health Services advises that you not to go into the water when you see this sign.



Blue sign – Safe to swim, unless there has been a heavy rainfall within the last 48 hours.

This sign means that, if it has rained heavily at the beach site within the last 48 hours, York Region Health Services advises that you do not go into the water. This is because E.coli levels in beach water tend to be higher during this time.

Beach closures

Beaches will be closed when there are indications of hazardous or infectious materials present in the water, or in the event of blue-green algae bloom. When the water is once again safe for swimming, the beach will be re-opened.

Why is it important to obey the beach signs?

Beach signs are intended to keep you safe from bacteria and other hazards in the water that can make you sick. High levels of bacteria can cause skin, ear, eye, nose and throat infections, as well as stomach disorders.