



MAINE established a unified beach-water-quality monitoring and education system that also assists towns with identification and remediation of pollution sources.

The Maine Healthy Beaches program has been established to ensure that Maine's swimming waters remain safe and clean. The MHB program will notify the public when the water quality at a coastal beach is poor. The program has established a unified beach-water-quality monitoring and education system that also assists towns with identification and remediation of pollution sources.

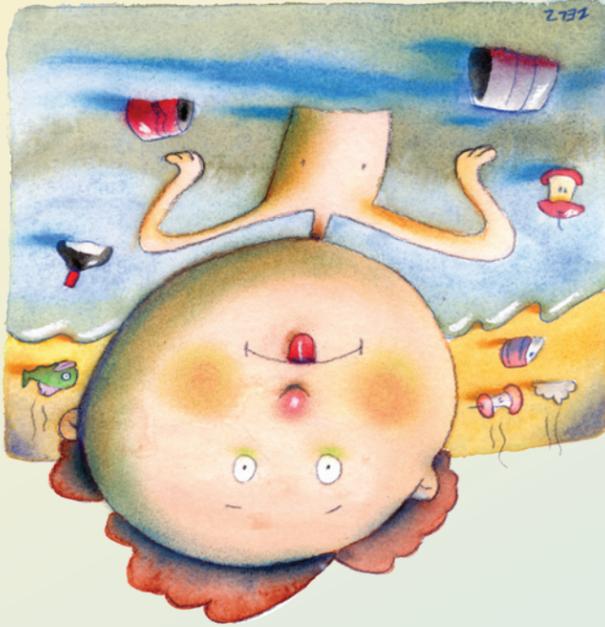


Help Keep Maine Beaches Healthy



Maine's inland and coastal beaches are known worldwide for their natural beauty and, of course, great swimming! Our beaches are wonderful places for families to enjoy summer days in Maine, but when lakes, ponds and coastal beaches become crowded, or contaminated runoff reaches the beaches following rain events, potential health risks exist. This guide will help you learn about the risks and what everyone can do to help make sure our beautiful beaches stay safe and clean.

A GUIDE TO SAFER SWIMMING IN MAINE



Stay informed. Stay safe. Stay healthy.

About Water-Related Illnesses
Stomachaches, diarrhea, flu-like symptoms, skin rashes, ear and eye infections or worse can be caused by bacteria and viruses in our swimming water. Children and adults can contract these illnesses if they accidentally swallow or come in contact with water at the beach that has become contaminated.

How is water contaminated?
Water at Maine's lakes, ponds, and coastal swimming beaches can become contaminated by fecal matter which carries harmful bacteria and viruses. These unsanitary conditions can be due to several possible causes:

- Improperly disposed of diapers or lack of swim diapers on small children
- A vomiting or fecal accident in the water
- Animal feces, including pets, waterfowl, wildlife, and livestock
- Malfunctioning septic systems in the vicinity
- Boats releasing sewage into the water
- Rainfall/flooding, storm water runoff, and sewage treatment overflows

When beach waters are shallow and crowded on hot summer days

Will I get sick if I go into the water when there is an advisory or closure?
There is an increased risk for illness with any water contact. Exposure to high bacteria levels may cause nausea, diarrhea, stomach cramps, chills, and fever. Skin rashes and infections of the eyes, ears, nose, and throat may also occur. Shower immediately after contact with potentially contaminated water. If you experience any of these symptoms, you should contact your physician and report any recreational water-derived illnesses to the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Hotline (24/7): 1-800-821-5821.

the beach to usage. A beach may be closed or warning flags posted on or near the beach as a result of, but not limited to: sewage treatment plant malfunctions, severe flooding, rip currents, sharks, hazardous surf conditions, and other safety hazards.



ordinance in place to close a beach. A closure includes the ability to keep people out of the water or close the beach to usage. A beach may be closed or warning flags posted on or near the beach as a result of, but not limited to: sewage treatment plant malfunctions, severe flooding, rip currents, sharks, hazardous surf conditions, and other safety hazards.

What is a closure?
Closures, more severe than an advisory, are determined by a number of potential factors and often based on chronic bacteria results. While it is rare in Maine to have closures, they do occur in certain situations. A municipality must have a specific ordinance in place to close a beach. A closure includes the ability to keep people out of the water or close the beach to usage. A beach may be closed or warning flags posted on or near the beach as a result of, but not limited to: sewage treatment plant malfunctions, severe flooding, rip currents, sharks, hazardous surf conditions, and other safety hazards.

What does an advisory or closure mean in Maine?
An advisory posted on a Maine Healthy Beaches (MHB) program sign at the beach or on the Web site is a recommendation to the public to avoid water contact activities in areas where bacteria results have exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standards for recreational water contact. It is recommended that the public avoid all water contact activities. Risk of illness can result from contacting the water in multiple ways. Those include ingestion of water while swimming; getting water in the nose, eyes, or ears; or entry through an open wound.



What is an advisory?
An advisory posted on a Maine Healthy Beaches (MHB) program sign at the beach or on the Web site is a recommendation to the public to avoid water contact activities in areas where bacteria results have exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standards for recreational water contact. It is recommended that the public avoid all water contact activities. Risk of illness can result from contacting the water in multiple ways. Those include ingestion of water while swimming; getting water in the nose, eyes, or ears; or entry through an open wound.

Have a Safe and Healthy Summer!

For more information, visit our Web site:
www.MaineHealthyBeaches.org
Or link to these other online resources:
www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming
www.epa.gov/ost/beaches



For coastal swim beach advisory information, check out the Web site (www.MaineHealthyBeaches.org) and click on: Beach Status to find current information on the beaches participating in the Maine Healthy Beaches program; or contact the local beach manager

To contact the Maine Healthy Beaches program:

Keri Lindberg or Esperanza Stancioff
Maine Healthy Beaches Coordinator/University of Maine Cooperative Extension/Sea Grant
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Nancy Beardsley
P.E. Division Director/Maine Department of Health & Human Services/Health Engineering/
Division of Environmental Health
207.287.5686

Illustrations: Eric Zelz; Photos: iStock Photo; Design: Kathlyn Tenga-González, Maine Sea Grant
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You remembered the sunscreen.

The beach umbrella.
Your hat and sunglasses.
What else do you need to remember for healthy swimming at the beach?



Think about it.

You share the water with everyone else at the beach. If a baby has a leaky diaper, or someone has diarrhea, the water can become contaminated... and swallowing it or coming into contact with it can make you sick.



THINK HEALTHY. ACT HEALTHY.



SWIM HEALTHY.

Practice Healthy Beach Habits!

Maine is famous for its beautiful beaches and healthy swimming waters. There are things you can do to help keep them that way, and help prevent water-related illnesses.

What YOU can do while at the beach:

- Avoid swallowing beach water and try not to let any get in your mouth.
- Change diapers away from the water's edge—in a bathroom if possible—and dispose of in a sanitary manner; germs can spread if dirty diapers are not sealed properly.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, liquid hand sanitizers, or sanitary wipes after using the bathroom or cleaning children.
- Take your kids on bathroom breaks often—sometimes “I have to go” means it’s already too late!
- Feel nauseous or have diarrhea? Don’t swim. Tell the lifeguard or beach manager of any accidents.
- Be aware that contamination of the water is typically the worst following significant rainfall. To avoid risk, consider staying out of the water 48 hours following a significant rain event.

What you can do about ANIMALS affecting the beach:

- Waterfowl and other animals are attracted by trash—please dispose of refuse properly.
- Do not feed the gulls, other birds, or wildlife on or near the beach.
- Dogs may not be allowed at many beaches. Please check before you go and when allowed—dispose of its waste properly (bring small plastic bags with you).

What you can do as a BOATER:

- Never discharge untreated sewage directly into the water.
- Make certain you know the laws and best boating practices.
- For more details on best practices and for pumpout station locations, see our *Healthy Boating Equals Healthy Beaches* brochure www.mainehealthybeaches.org

What you can do as a CITIZEN:

- Maintain and routinely pump out your septic system.
- Report any illicit or questionable discharges to your local Code Enforcement Officer.
- Properly dispose of pet waste and/or livestock manure.
- Maintain appropriate vegetative buffers along waterways.

Share the knowledge – many people are not aware that beach health risks exist!

Thank You.

WWW.MAINEHEALTHYBEACHES.ORG

Co-sponsored by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension/Sea Grant, Maine Department of Environmental Protection and other state agency partners. Funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000.

To report an illness call (207) 287-8016, (207) 287-4479 TTY or 1-800-821-5821

