

How You Can Help

- Observe local stoop and scoop bylaws. Remove your pet's droppings immediately from streets, public parks and private property.
- If appropriate, detach eavestroughs from sewers so they discharge onto lawns or other permeable surfaces.
- Prevent eavestroughs from emptying onto your septic bed.
- Reduce household water use. This helps prevent overloading municipal sewage treatment plants and septic systems.
- Ensure washroom additions to your home are connected properly to the sanitary sewer pipes or septic tank.
- Upgrade septic systems and keep them in good working order.
- Fence livestock away from streams, and provide them with alternate water sources. This will benefit herd health and the environment.
- If you farm, develop and follow a nutrient management plan.
- Ensure that runoff from feedlots and manure piles is properly contained.

If you can't see
your feet* ...
don't swim
in the
water!

*at waist depth of an adult

Fun In The Sun

Follow these tips to keep your family safe:

- Stay in the shade between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If there is no shade, use an umbrella.
- **SLIP!** on clothing to cover your arms and legs to protect your skin from the sun.
- **SLAP!** on a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and neck. Hats without a wide brim, like baseball caps, do not provide enough protection.
- **SLOP!** on sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. The words "broad-spectrum" must appear on the label. Apply sunscreen generously 20 minutes before going to the beach, and reapply frequently. Don't forget to put sunscreen on your lips, ears and nose - these parts burn easily.
- Keep babies younger than one year out of the direct sun. Strollers or playpens should be in the shade.
- Keep well hydrated by drinking plenty of water.
- Do not dive into unknown waters.
- Beware of undertows.
- Always supervise children in the water.

For up-to-date information contact:

Beach Water Infoline

(519) 482-5119 Ext. 2501

Toll free 1-877-837-6143 Ext. 2501

Huron County Health Unit

77722B London Road, RR 5,

Clinton, Ontario N0M 1L0

(519) 482-3416

Toll free 1-877-837-6143

Email: beaches@huroncounty.ca

Website: www.huroncounty.ca



Rev. 05/06



safe day at

THE BEACH

Huron County Beach Water Quality



Why Are Beaches Posted?

Beaches are posted with warning signs because the water may contain high levels of bacteria. These can increase a swimmer's risk of developing irritations and infections. The most common problems are minor skin, eye, ear, nose, and throat infections, and stomach disorders.



For beach postings, refer to the contact information included in this brochure.



Sampling beach water.

Guidelines For Postings

Ontario beaches are posted with warnings of possible health risks when elevated *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) densities are present. The current *E. coli* test is only an indicator that there is fecal contamination present from either animal or human or both. There could also be harmful bacteria, parasites and/or viruses present in the water.

The recreational water quality guideline of 100 *E. coli* per 100 mL of water is set jointly by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care. The water is safe most of the time, however caution must always be taken when swimming in any natural water source. Weather conditions are the leading factor that can adversely affect water quality.

Before a beach is posted, results from several samples on several sampling days are required. A type of average called a 'geometric mean' is calculated using the sample results. The geometric mean is used rather than a normal arithmetic average because it reduces the biasing effect of a single high reading.

It takes approximately 24 hours to receive the previous day's water testing results from the laboratory (*E. coli* takes 18-22 hours to incubate and culture). By then, the water may have changed to either safe or unsafe for swimming conditions. For this reason and based on many years of consistent water sampling data that the Huron County Health Unit posts beaches on a seasonal average.

You should not swim if the water is cloudy due to wave action or following a heavy rainfall. Cloudy water can be an indication of high levels of bacteria that may pose a risk to human health.

What Is Polluting Our Beaches?

- Faulty or overworked septic systems, agricultural runoff and sewage treatment plant bypasses are the three main contributors.
- Elevated levels of *E. coli* often occur after heavy rainfall because of surface water runoff.
- Fecal material from pets, wildlife and birds can also wash into storm sewers, rivers and lakes.
- High wave action can stir up bacteria settled on the lake bottom.

Read The Signs

Warning signs are posted at all public swimming locations.

A red sign indicates that high levels of bacteria in the water may pose a risk to your health. This location is not recommended for swimming.

A blue sign indicates the water may be polluted with high levels of bacteria for up to two days following heavy rainfall. This location is not recommended for swimming for at least 48 hours. Call the Beach Water Infoline for rainfall information.

