

BEACH WATER SAFETY

During the summer months, York Region Public Health monitors water quality at Regional public beaches to ensure that the water is safe for swimming. The following information will help to make your trip to the beach a fun, safe and healthy one.

Which beaches are tested?

- Claredon Beach Park
- De La Salle Beach
- Franklin Beach
- Holmes Point Beach
- Sheppard Avenue Park
- Jackson's Point Beach/Bonnie Park
- Joy Marritt Parkette
- North Gwillimbury Park
- Peninsula Resort Beach
- Riverview Park (formerly known as Port Bolster Beach)
- Willow Beach Park
- Willow Wharf Dock
- Corner Park
- Cedar Beach (Musselman's Lake)

Why beaches are tested?

Water samples are collected from each beach site a minimum of once per week from mid-June to end of August. Beach samples are tested for *E.coli* levels by the Public Health Ontario Laboratory. High levels of bacteria can cause illnesses in swimmers including skin, ear, eye, nose and throat infections as well as stomach disorders.

Beach postings

All public beaches are posted with a sign informing the public if the beach is safe for swimming. The blue sign indicates it is safe to swim unless there has been heavy rainfall in the past 48 hours. When the level of bacteria is high enough to cause illness the sign will change to red indicating it is unsafe to swim. Beaches will be closed when there are indicators of hazardous or infectious materials present in the water or in the event of blue-green algae bloom.

To find out which beaches are safe for swimming, please call York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653 or visit york.ca/beaches. Beach postings will be regularly updated as beach water testing results become available.

There are many factors that contribute to water pollution, including:

- Seasonal and storm surface run-off into rivers and lakes
- Sewer overflows or malfunctioning septic systems
- Agricultural manure and feedlot run-off
- Domestic pet waste or large populations of waterfowl
- Warm water temperatures

You can help by:

- Properly disposing of garbage
- Not feeding geese and birds
- Stoop and scoop if you have pets
- Not going into the water with an infection or open wound

Contaminants can be found anywhere within the beach area from sand to water. To prevent infection or illness from pathogens present in the water and/or sand, the following precautions must be taken:

- Ensure children practice hand hygiene after swimming and playing in the sand. Washing hands with soap and water removes dirt and disease-causing microorganisms. Hand sanitizer containing 70 to 90% alcohol concentration may also be used to kill disease-causing microorganisms on hands. When hands are visibly soiled, handwashing with soap and water is preferred; if soap and water is not available, hands may be cleaned using a moistened towelette or wipe before using hand sanitizer. Do not use disinfectant wipes to clean hands
- Ensure children do not swallow water and/or get water into their eyes while swimming
- Prevent children from ingesting sand while playing on the beach

For more information refer to *A Public Health Guide For Child Care Providers* at york.ca/childcareguide

Please note that additional public health measures may be advised during an outbreak or pandemic by YRPH and the Ministry of Education.