

Lake Superior Beach Monitoring Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Beach Program?

The Lake Superior Beach Monitoring Program monitors *E. coli* levels at 38 Lake Superior public beaches each summer. Higher use beaches are monitored twice a week and beaches that have lower use are monitored once a week. A health advisory is posted at the beach when bacteria counts are high.

When is an advisory posted?

An advisory is posted when monitoring results indicate an increased risk of getting sick from swimming or wading. Advisories are posted based on water quality models or when a single water sample exceeds 235 *E. coli* colonies per 100 milliliters or when the geometric mean of five water samples within a 30-day period exceeds 126 *E. coli* colonies per 100 milliliters.

How can I get notified of beach advisories?

Signs are posted at the beach when an advisory is issued. To learn about current advisories before you get to the beach:

- Visit the program website www.mnbeaches.org
- Call the beach advisories hotline at 218-725-7724

How is water contaminated?

Sources of contamination include sewage overflows, stormwater runoff, boating waste, and animal or human waste.

How can people lessen the risk of illness when at the beach?

- Don't swallow the water
- Shower before and after swimming
- Avoid swimming after a rain event

How can people minimize beach contamination?

- Don't go in the water if you have diarrhea
- Change diapers away from the water
- Properly dispose of trash, animal waste, and boat waste
- Don't feed geese and gulls
- Maintain septic systems

WATERBORNE DISEASES UNIT

Minnesota Department of Health
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164
651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414
health.beaches@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414. Printed on recycled paper.