



Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities



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PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: Local Media Outlets
From: Central Michigan District Health Department
RE: CMDHD Monitoring Public Bathing Beaches for Unsafe Water
Release Date: June 11, 2024

CMDHD is Monitoring Public Bathing Beaches for Unsafe Water

*Our program monitors public beaches for dangers like high *E. coli* and algal bloom presence.*

Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) is conducting a bathing beach monitoring program of public beaches in our six-county district of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties. Monitoring consists of weekly water sampling and testing for *E. coli*, posting results on the state website, and posting advisories at beaches with elevated *E. coli* results.

“Testing beaches during the swimming season is important to make sure the public is informed of high *E. coli* levels that pose a greater risk of illness,” said Steve King, CMDHD Environmental Health Director. “Beaches posted with an advisory should not be used for swimming until further testing shows bacteria levels are within acceptable levels.”

Surface water contaminated with elevated levels of *E. coli* bacteria can result in illness, with symptoms including nausea, vomiting, stomachache, diarrhea, headache, and fever. Other illnesses associated with swimming in contaminated waters include ear, eye, nose and throat infections, skin rashes, and skin infections, which can be serious. In highly polluted waters, swimmers run the risk of exposure to more serious disease-causing organisms, such as *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *E. coli* STEC, Norovirus, and *Shigella*.

Beaches that are open to the public but not part of a monitoring program - including smaller beaches, campgrounds, and children’s camps - have been asked by the health department to implement a water sampling program that meets the State standards. Public beaches which are not being monitored for *E. coli* are required to post a sign stating they are not being monitored.

Summer days spent at Michigan public beaches are fun and can be done safely by following these guidelines:

Please visit us online at www.cmdhd.org.

- If there has been a heavy rain event within the past 48 hours, avoid swimming due to runoff and likely higher levels of bacteria in the water. Avoid waters that are unusually cloudy or muddy after rain. Rivers often have elevated *E. coli* levels after heavy rainfall.
- Large amounts of waterfowl present – like ducks, geese, or seagulls -- could mean an increased amount of bird droppings that contain high concentrations of *E. coli* bacteria. Lakes with a large duck population may also pose a higher risk of swimmer’s itch.
- Do not swim in lakes, ponds, or rivers if you have open sores or lesions on your body, to avoid infection.
- Check [CMDHD’s Public Beach Monitoring](#) for a list of beaches we monitor. Find the number of closings the beach has had in recent years on [Michigan’s BeachGuard website](#).
- If the water is discolored with a greenish, blue, or milky appearance, this may indicate a harmful algal bloom (HAB). Certain algal blooms can produce toxins that could make someone ill. Do not swim in these areas and keep pets from drinking the water. Suspected algal blooms can be reported by sending an email to AlgaeBloom@Michigan.gov. More information can be found on EGLE’s HAB page.
- Do not swim where the beach has an abundance of trash and litter.
- Dry off immediately with a clean towel after getting out of the water. Do not forget to use sunscreen and take precautions against sunburn. It is also a good idea to take a shower after spending a day at the beach.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before eating.

This swimming season will be the 23rd consecutive year CMDHD will be monitoring public beaches. It is also the eighth year in partnership with the Midland County Health Department to assist in monitoring select Midland County beaches. For more information on the beach monitoring program, visit www.egle.state.mi.us/beach.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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To request an interview, please visit our website (cmdhd.org) and fill out the [Media Interview Request Form](#).



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