

Think Healthy. Swim Healthy.

Practice Healthy Beach Habits!

Maryland is famous for its pristine beaches and healthy swimming waters. Here are some things you can do to help keep it that way!

How to help prevent water-related illnesses:

- Be sure to avoid swimming near storm drains along the beach and within 48 hours of a heavy rain event, or until the water clears.
- Try not to swallow beach water.
- Shower or bathe after swimming.
- Dogs may not be allowed at some beaches. Please check before you go. If you bring a pet to the beach, dispose of its waste properly (bring small plastic bags with you.)
- You should avoid swimming if you feel ill or have open cuts or sores. If water contact can't be avoided, cover your open cut or sore with waterproof bandages.
- If they are available, use diaper-changing stations in restroom facilities, or change diapers away from the waters' edge.
- Remember to properly dispose of used diapers.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- Please take all trash with you offsite in a bag.
- Volunteer in local beach clean up efforts.
- Remember not to feed seagulls, geese, ducks or other wildlife.
- When boating, you should use an approved marina pump-out stations for boat waste disposal.
- If you see any unsafe or unhealthy conditions, be sure to report them to a lifeguard or beach manager.
- Remember to check marylandhealthybeaches.com, or your county website, for water quality information about your beach.

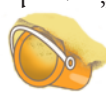
Thank You.



www.MarylandHealthyBeaches.com



WHAT IS A BEACH?



The State of Maryland defines beaches as, "natural waters, including points of access, used by the public for swimming, surfing, or other similar water contact activities." Beaches are places where people engage in, or are likely to engage in, activities that could result in the accidental ingestion of water. MDE monitors Maryland beaches from Memorial Day to Labor Day to protect public health.

Good beach water quality is important for the safety and health of swimmers. Water quality can deteriorate due to pollution caused by runoff after storm events, trash, debris, or even sewage. Sewage sources include bypasses from sewer pumping stations, combined storm water sewer overflows, and sewage spills. Other sources that may cause poor water quality include failing septic systems, boat waste discharges, and wastes originating from pets, wildlife and farm animals.

POLLUTION, WATER QUALITY AND MONITORING

Pathogens that may pose a health threat to swimmers can occur naturally or are associated with untreated sewage and animal waste. Direct exposure to pathogenic organisms in the form of bacteria, viruses, protozoa, or worms may cause illnesses in swimmers. Because the number of potential pathogens is too vast to monitor individually, indicator organisms, such as *Enterococci* and *E. coli*, are monitored and used to assess recreational water quality. Indicator organisms are bacteria commonly found in the gut of all warm-blooded animals and are used to indicate a recent source of pollution in recreational waters.



WHAT IS THE MARYLAND BEACHES PROGRAM?

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) works with local health departments to enhance monitoring and improve the public notification process regarding beach water quality in Maryland. In October 2000, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) passed the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act, which continues to provide funding for coastal beach monitoring. Under this program the responsibility of monitoring and public notification of beach information is delegated to the local health departments. MDE encourages you to enjoy Maryland's beaches. Our beaches provide wonderful opportunities for a variety of recreational activities such as swimming, fishing, and boating. While you're at our beaches, we hope that you will leave only footprints.



RESOURCES FOR BEACH INFORMATION

You can contact MDE's Beaches Program by calling 1-800-633-6101, x3618 or visiting www.MarylandHealthyBeaches.com. Before heading to the beach, you can obtain information regarding beach water quality by contacting local health departments or find information at the following websites:

- Maryland Department of the Environment (mde.maryland.gov)
- U.S. EPA (www.epa.gov)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)
- Maryland Department of Health (health.maryland.gov)

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

ANNE ARUNDEL:	(410) 222-7241
ALLEGANY:	(301) 759-5000
BALTIMORE:	(410) 887-3663
CALVERT:	(410) 535-3922
CARROLL:	(410) 876-1844
CAROLINE:	(410) 479-8030
CECIL:	(410) 996-5160
FREDERICK:	(301) 600-1029
GARRETT:	(301) 334-7760
HARFORD:	(410) 838-3047
KENT:	(410) 778-1350
MONTGOMERY:	(240) 777-3986
QUEEN ANNE'S:	(410) 758-0721
SOMERSET:	(443) 523-1700
ST. MARYS:	(301) 475-4330
WASHINGTON:	(240) 313-3400
WICOMICO:	(410) 546-4446
WORCESTER:	(410) 632-1220

