

Maine Healthy Beaches Program Quick Facts



We are all in this together! Beach activities, upland land use, and off-shore activities all impact beach water quality. Please help us educate the public & advocate for best practices to keep our beaches healthy!

- 🌍 The Maine Healthy Beaches (MHB) Program is a statewide effort to monitor water quality and protect public health on Maine's coastal, marine beaches.
 - 🌍 Participating beaches are monitored for the fecal indicator bacteria *Enterococci* sp. which indicates fecal contamination & the *possible* presence of disease-causing microorganisms.
 - 🌍 Participating beaches may be posted under an advisory (or a closure in severe cases) when *Enterococci* levels exceed the safety limit. The beach status is posted at major beach access points & online via the program's website: www.mainehealthybeaches.org
 - 🌍 A beach's status is determined by multiple factors including but not limited to: bacteria monitoring results, environmental conditions, risk of pollution, historical water quality, and other known safety hazards.
 - 🌍 Maine's beach notification threshold for recreational water contact is **104** most probable number (MPN) of *Enterococci* per 100 milliliters of sample water (US EPA approved). When bacteria levels exceed this limit, there's an *increased probability* of contracting illness from the water.
 - 🌍 Symptoms of recreational waterborne illness (RWI) may include: nausea, diarrhea, stomach cramps, chills and fever. Skin rashes and infections of the eyes, ears, nose and throat may also occur. If you have an RWI, contact your physician.
 - 🌍 Sources of fecal contamination may be human and non-human and can include: malfunctioning septic systems, sewage treatment plant or collection system overflows, polluted storm water runoff, untreated boat sewage, domestic animal waste, waterfowl and wildlife waste, and poor sanitary practices at the beach.
 - 🌍 Practice healthy habits:
 - Avoid swimming after heavy rainfall.
 - Do not ingest beach water
 - Take children to the bathroom often & use swim diapers
 - Don't swim if you have diarrhea or may vomit. Wash your hands
 - Dispose of trash and pet waste properly
 - Do not feed birds or wildlife
 - Maintain & pump out your septic system
 - Never discharge untreated boat sewage
 - Plant buffers along waterways to trap polluted runoff
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