



Media Release

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Public Health advises against swimming at area beaches after a significant rainfall

Due to the significant amount of rain that has fallen in Grey-Bruce in recent days, Grey Bruce Public Health is reminding residents and visitors that swimming at area beaches within 48 hours of heavy rain or while the water remains unusually cloudy can pose a risk to human health.

Rain can have a significant impact on beach water quality. Large amounts of rain can wash contaminants into local waterways, which can increase bacterial levels. There's also a risk, in some communities, that significant rainfall can overwhelm wastewater collection and treatment systems, leading to sewage bypasses. Rain can also stir up contaminants in beach water.

"While Public Health does have a beach-water-monitoring program, it can take days to receive test results from submitted samples. Weather conditions, like the significant rainfall we experienced in Grey-Bruce over the weekend, can cause water quality to change from day to day or hour to hour, meaning posted results do not always reflect current conditions," says Senior Public Health Manager Andrew Barton.

"This is why Grey Bruce Public Health encourages people to use their best judgment – in real-time – to determine whether to swim in or use recreational water.

"Our best advice is to avoid swimming and not allow children or pets to play in the water at local beaches or waterways if it's rained within the past 48 hours, if the water is so cloudy that you cannot see your feet at waist-deep, or if there is a large number of birds or algae in the water."

[Pathogens, such as E. coli](#), can be present in beach water at levels above Ministry of Health guidelines. This water can cause infections or illness if swallowed or if it gets into the eyes, ears, nose, or open cuts or wounds.

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The most common types of illnesses associated with swimming or playing in recreational waters are:

- Skin, ear or, eye infections;
- Gastrointestinal illness, such as diarrhea or vomiting.

Beach water should never be swallowed no matter how clear it is.

For More Information:

To connect with the Medical Officer of Health or the program manager, please contact:

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