

Health Unit Media Release

June 21, 2012



Beach Water Quality

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has once again begun weekly water sampling of the area's public bathing beaches. The beaches will be monitored weekly throughout the summer season until Aug 31, 2012.

This year the following public swimming areas will be monitored:

In Lanark County: Almonte Beach, Dalhousie Lake, Centennial Beach, Riverside Beach, Lanark Beach, Pakenham Beach, Rideau Ferry Yacht Club, Robertson Lake Beach, Smiths Falls Sr.

In Leeds and Grenville: Sand Bay Charleston Lake County Park, St. Lawrence Park, Lyn Valley Conservation Area, South Crosby Beach, Portland Campbell Street Beach, **Foley Mountain** Beach, Camp Hyanto, Joel Stone Beach, Kendrick's Park, Lower Beverley Township Park, Bellamy Park, Kelly's Beach, Merrickville, Westport Sand Lake

Every week a total of five water samples will be collected from each beach. The results will then be analyzed for the presence of E. coli (Escherichia coli) bacteria. **If the results exceed the bathing water standard of 100 E. coli, the beach will be posted with a "WARNING Unsafe for Bathing" sign indicating that the level of bacteria in the water may pose a risk to your health if you choose to swim.** This information will appear on our website and in radio reports. This year you can also follow the beach posting results by using Facebook and Twitter. Updates will be posted Friday mornings by 9am.

Research has shown that when people are swimming at beaches where the water has a high E. coli level, there is a direct relationship with an increase in ear, eye, nose and throat infections in swimmers. The bathing beach will remain posted until test results indicate that the water quality meets the bathing beach water standard. To help you better understand "Why Beaches are Posted" the Health Unit has developed an information card that is available at any health unit office or township office that has a bathing beach. It is also available on our website at http://www.healthunit.org/water/resources/Beaches_Info_Card.pdf

Bacterial water quality is one parameter used to determine water quality. Other variables, which are assessed and evaluated, are the presence of a blue green algae bloom, accidental spills that may pollute the water and any safety issue that could impact on the health of the bathers. At any time if these variables are believed to have an impact on the beach's safety, the beach will be posted as "Unsafe for Bathing".

Posting information is available on the Health Unit website http://www.healthunit.org/water/test/beach_results.htm, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/LGLHealthUnit or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/LGLbeaches or by calling the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853.

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