

## Beach Water Quality FAQ's

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### **How often is beach water quality tested?**

*Local governments who participate in the Interior Health beach program test their beaches weekly during the bathing season, June to September. Sampling provides a “snapshot” of the water quality at a specific point in time at a specific location. It helps to understand the water quality at a location, but is not the only factor.*

### **Who does the sampling and testing?**

*Local governments involved in the Interior Health beach program are responsible for collecting beach samples and for submitting them to the lab for analysis. Interior Health receives the results and contacts the local government if results are higher than the limits outlined in the Guidelines for Canadian Recreational Water Quality.*

### **What is E.coli?**

E.coli is a bacterium that is commonly present in the intestines of warm-blooded animals and humans.

### **What does it mean when the E.coli counts are high?**

High counts of E. coli can indicate animal or human fecal contamination. When the counts in a water sample are high, there is an increased risk of illness to swimmers and bathers who use the water.

### **What does it mean when a “No Swimming” advisory is posted at a beach?**

Posting a “No Swimming” sign is done to protect the health and safety of the public when the water quality is unacceptable.

### **If there is an advisory in place, when is it safe to swim in the water again?**

When follow-up water samples shows that the beach water quality has returned to an acceptable level and the health risk is low, the advisory will be removed.