



ALLEGAN COUNTY BEACHES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We are fortunate to be close to some wonderful beaches in Michigan. However, while we want beach goers to have fun when visiting the beaches, we encourage you to take steps to avoid illness. Below are some frequently asked questions around Allegan County beaches.

Does the Health Department test beach water for E.coli?

Currently, Allegan County Health Department does not test the beach water for E.coli.



Why isn't the beach water tested?

With the testing we have available, it takes up to one day to get results back of a water sample. Due to the nature of this test, when there was high counts of E.coli, we would not find out until the following day and people that swam were already exposed. We felt that we weren't helping prevent disease.

We currently do not have the resources to test the beach water every day. If you feel that is something that should be done, please contact your **local state representative**

Will advisories still be issued?

We will continue to issue advisories if there is some type of contamination event, such as a manure spill, combined sewage over-flow (CSO), sanitary sewage over flow (SSO), etc.



How will I know if the water is safe to swim in?

Generally, Allegan County beaches and State Parks are safe. However, if you choose to swim, you are at risk of being exposed to recreational waterborne illness. Use your best judgement when making that decision.

How can bacteria and other microbes in beach water affect me?

People should continue to enjoy the beach, but they should remember that all beaches, everywhere, at all times have microorganisms, which can cause illness. Exposure to beach water with high levels of microbial contamination could cause ear, eye, nose and throat infections, gastrointestinal illness or skin rashes. It may also lead to parasitic infections.



What can I do if the beach is not monitored?

- Avoid swimming after a heavy rain.
- Look for storm drains (pipes that drain polluted water from streets) along the beach. Don't swim near them.
- Look for trash and other signs of pollution such as oil slicks in the water. These kinds of pollutants may indicate the presence of disease causing microorganisms that may also have been washed into the water.
- If you think your beach water is contaminated, **call the Health Department**. Our main goal is to keep people healthy and safe, so we want to know about suspected beach water contamination
- Work with your **local representatives** to create a monitoring program.



**Beach Advisories and Closings
throughout the state of Michigan**

