



## McHenry County Department of Health

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[www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info)

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### County's beach sampling program begins May 26 *National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week May 24*

**Woodstock IL** – McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) will begin its beach sampling program on Wednesday, May 26 which coincides with National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week (May 24-28). This annual observance raises awareness about healthy swimming behaviors, including ways to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and injuries. RWIs are spread by swimming in water contaminated by poorly maintained recreational water (swimming pools, water parks, lake and rivers), wild or domestic animal waste, bather defecation or agricultural runoff.

To ensure residents enjoy a safe and healthy swimming season, MCDH tests the County's 35 beaches at least every 2 weeks, from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Samples are taken from both shallow and deep areas, tested for bacterial levels and compared to acceptable limits set by the State Health Department. Results are posted regularly and can include a swimmer's advisory or closure of the beach, if elevated E. coli levels are found. Check online for beach results at [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info), link to Environmental Health, "public beaches".

The best way to prevent RWIs is to keep out germs in the first place. Everyone can help create healthy swimming experiences this summer by following these six healthy swimming steps:

- PLEASE don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- PLEASE don't swallow the water.
- PLEASE practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- PLEASE take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often.
- PLEASE change diapers in a bathroom or diaper-changing area and not at poolside.
- PLEASE wash your children (after toileting) with soap and water before they go swimming.

Gastroenteritis-type illnesses are most common, with symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, headache and low grade fever. Early notification can prevent additional people from getting sick. If you become sick after swimming at a McHenry County beach, notify MCDH at 815-334-4585 as well as the beach operator.

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***"Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966."***