

WHAT TYPE OF BACTERIA?

Ocean waters are tested to see if a fecal bacterium called enterococcus is present. Enterococcus is found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals, including humans. High levels of these bacteria show there is fecal material in the water and that microscopic disease-causing organisms may be present.

HOW DOES THE WATER GET CONTAMINATED?

Fecal contamination can be due to several possible causes, both near the shore and inland.

- » Animal and seabird feces
- » Swimmers with diarrhea
- » Children not properly cleaned after using the bathroom
- » Improperly disposed of diapers
- » Vomiting or fecal accident in the water
- » Agricultural and storm water run-off
- » Sewage treatment plant spills
- » Failing or leaking private septic tanks
- » Improper boat waste disposal

HAVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY SUMMER!

For more information, visit our Web site:
www.healthoregon.org/beach

For 24 hr. beach advisory information call:
877-290-6767

To contact the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program:
800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 608
Portland, OR 97232
971-673-0431
beach.monitoring@state.or.us



BEFORE YOU GO TO THE BEACH...

A GUIDE TO WATER QUALITY FOR OREGON BEACH VISITORS



OREGON BEACH MONITORING PROGRAM

Oregon's Beach Monitoring Program helps protect people who play in the coastal waters. We test ocean waters for bacterial contamination, issue health advisories and offer public education and prevention tips.

WATER QUALITY AT OREGON BEACHES

Whether you're at the beach to get a tan, wade the surf or swim, water quality is important. It's hard to believe anyone would contaminate the ocean waters with human and animal waste — but it happens.

Here are some tips to help you enjoy your time at the beach and safeguard your health.

WHY TEST?

Microscopic organisms, such as bacteria and protozoa, are a natural part of the environment. When they are present in the ocean water in large numbers, they can make people sick. Oregon's Beach Monitoring Program does regular water testing to look for high levels of bacteria and let visitors know when there is a health concern.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE IF THERE IS AN ADVISORY?

A water contact advisory means you should avoid contact with the ocean water at that beach. Don't do things that may cause you to swallow water, such as swimming and surfing. Animals can also become ill, so keep your pets out of the ocean.

IS THE BEACH CLOSED WHEN THERE IS AN ADVISORY?

The beach is not closed. An advisory means that water contact is discouraged, but the beach remains open for activities that don't involve playing in the water.

WILL I GET SICK IF I GO IN THE WATER?

Swimming or playing in contaminated water may cause minor illnesses like diarrhea, stomachache, vomiting, fever, chills, or headache. Other illnesses include infections of the skin, ear, eyes, nose and throat. People can develop these illnesses if they accidentally swallow or come in contact with contaminated water.

Children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems have a greater chance of becoming sick from contact with contaminated water.

Getting sick depends on many things, including the amount of bacteria in the water, the amount of time you spend in the water, the route of exposure (such as - swallowing or touching), your age and general health.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY FAMILY OR MYSELF?

- » Look for a posted advisory sign before entering the water.



- » After a heavy rainfall, wait 48 hours before going swimming.
- » Shower after swimming or playing at the beach.
- » Don't swallow beach water.
- » Wash your hands before eating or drinking
- » Keep your face and head out of the water, or if possible wear earplugs and goggles.
- » Do not swim if you are sick.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WENT SWIMMING AND DIDN'T KNOW AN ADVISORY WAS IN EFFECT?

Take a shower after swimming. Wash swimsuits and towels as soon as possible. Watch for signs of illness, especially if you accidentally swallowed ocean water or put your head underwater. If you are sick, contact your physician.

SHOULD I CANCEL MY TRIP WHEN AN ADVISORY IS IN EFFECT?

Absolutely not! There are plenty of other beach activities that don't involve going in the water – beachcombing, building sandcastles, flying kites, visiting local shops and much more.