



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Lake County General Health District

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**NEWS RELEASE
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HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING WEEK 2015 MAKE A HEALTHY SPLASH: SHARE THE FUN, NOT THE GERMS!

The week before Memorial Day (May 18-24, 2015) is National Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. The goal of this week is to maximize the health benefits of swimming by promoting healthy and safe swimming. Just 2.5 hours of water-based physical activity per week results in health benefits across a lifetime. We each play a role in preventing illnesses caused by germs in the water we share and swim in and injuries such as drowning or those caused by improper handling of pool chemicals.

Why is this important?	Simple & effective prevention for everyone
<p>Illnesses caused by the germs in the water where we swim:</p> <p>In 2011-2013, almost 100 disease outbreaks were linked to swimming. So it is important to keep germs, pee, poop, sweat, and dirt out of the water we swim in.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe beach advisory signs telling when it is safe to swim • Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea • Don't pee or poop in the water • Don't swallow pool water • Take the children on bathroom breaks • Check and change diapers in the bathroom, not at poolside or on the beach • Properly dispose of your garbage at the beach
<p>Drowning:</p> <p>Drowning is the leading cause of injury death for children 1-4 years old.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure everyone knows how to swim • Use life jackets at the beach • Supervise children at the pool and beach • Know CPR
<p>Injuries caused by improper handling of pool chemicals:</p> <p>Mishandling of pool chemicals by pool operators and household pool owners leads to 5,000 emergency room visits annually across the country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and follow directions on product labels • Wear safety equipment such as goggles • Don't mix pool chemicals with each other

The bathing beach recreation season officially begins on Memorial Day. The Lake County General Health District will start reporting beach water quality at Mentor Headlands State Park Beach and Lake Metroparks

Fairport Harbor Beach. Every morning, a member of staff will go to these beaches to collect information and record observations. The information is then entered into a computer program called Virtual Beach that uses a mathematical system developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to predict the levels of E. coli bacteria that can increase your chances of getting sick when participating in water activities.

The model determines the chances of whether the level of E. coli present that day is greater than the standard. The models developed for each beach are site specific and give a daily prediction that will be reported as a Nowcast (forecast for E. coli) each morning to the beach operators. Three days out of the week, Health District staff collects water quality samples for E. coli analysis to validate each model for accuracy and reliability. If the prediction shows that the water quality is expected to be poor, the beach operators will be called and asked to post the advisory sign not to swim at that beach.

As always, the Health District recommends that the public look for the water quality Nowcast signage at the beach when deciding whether to go into the water. Additionally, it is recommended to avoid the water for 24-48 hours after a heavy rain of more than one-half inch in 24 hours. Beach-goers are encouraged to visit the Lake County General Health District website at <https://www.lcghd.org/beach> for more information on beach water quality and Nowcasting.

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