

# Healthy Recreational Waters

June 2025

Vermont is home to thousands of fresh water lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. Our waters are a great destination for everything from swimming to fishing to boating and tubing.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact

[AHS.VDHEnvHealth@Vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHEnvHealth@Vermont.gov).

## What are healthy beaches?

Healthy beaches are both safe and clean. But beaches and other swimming areas do not stay healthy all the time. Many factors can influence the overall health and safety of recreational waters: bacterial contamination, chemical spills, storm water runoff, harmful algae blooms, physical hazards, etc.

## How can water become contaminated with bacteria?

One major source of harmful bacterial is fecal contamination, which can come from diapers, feces from people, pets or wildlife, malfunctioning septic systems, storm water runoff and sewage treatment overflows.

## How are Vermont beaches monitored and tested?

Vermont State Parks follow the Health Department's Guidelines for Healthy Beaches. Swimming areas are sampled before the start of the swimming season and then at least once a week, depending on the conditions of the water body.

Municipal or non-profit managed public swimming areas should be monitored regularly according to the Health Department's Healthy Recreational Waters Guidelines.

## What can I do to help keep Vermont beaches healthy?

- Properly dispose of litter/animal wastes.
- Do not go swimming if you are feeling ill – especially if you have diarrhea.
- Do not feed birds or other wildlife on or near swimming areas.
- Do not dump anything in a storm drain.
- Report any suspected pollution event to beach management.

## What can I do to protect my health?

- Follow posted advisories or closings.
- Do not swallow beach water and try not to get it in your mouth.

**HealthVermont.gov/Environment**  
**802-863-7220**



- Stay out of the water 48 hours following a significant rain event.
- Shower after swimming.
- Wash hands before eating.
- Do not go in the water if you have diarrhea.

## What does an advisory or beach closing mean?



This sign is posted during all normal water quality conditions. It reminds bathers that the water is routinely monitored, and provides local contact information for the swimming area.



This sign is posted during or right after a heavy rainfall event of more than ½ inch over a 24-hour period. This sign should remain posted for at least 24 hours after a heavy rainfall event, or *E. coli* sample results are less than 235 cfu (colony forming unit) per 100 mL (milliliters). Local contact information is provided.



This sign is posted when *E. coli* sample results are greater than 235 cfu per 100 mL. This sign should remain posted until sample results are less than 235 cfu per 100 mL. The beach should be closed to swimming when this sign is posted.

### For more information:

Vermont State Parks: [VTStateParks.com/swimming.html](https://VTStateParks.com/swimming.html)

Vermont Department of Health: [HealthVermont.gov/environment/recreational-water](https://HealthVermont.gov/environment/recreational-water)

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: [cdc.gov/HealthyWater/swimming](https://cdc.gov/HealthyWater/swimming)