



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Know Water Conditions to Enjoy Endless Swim Opportunities in Vermont



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Media Contact:

Vermont Department of Health
Communication Office
802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – Vermont offers endless naturally beautiful and pristine settings to take a plunge into a cool lake, relax below a waterfall on a quiet stretch of river, or splish-splash in a pond. Swimming is healthy summertime fun for all ages, but it's important to know water conditions before you go.

Managed beaches at state parks, which draw thousands of visitors each summer, are some of the safest places to jump into the water and go for a swim. The beaches are monitored and tested for coliform bacteria from human and animal wastes, especially after a heavy rainfall, as well as for the cyanobacteria toxins that can come from blue-green algae blooms during the high heat of summer.

“State parks have an amazing water quality record,” said Rob Peterson, Vermont State Parks regional manager. “We test weekly for bacteria and all results are posted online for the public to view.”

Signs are also posted at many of the managed swim areas, showing the levels of coliform bacteria from recent tests.

And many of the beach areas have trained staff to identify blue-green algae blooms in order to protect small children and dogs who are more likely to ingest algae while playing at the shoreline. The state's interactive blue-green algae monitoring status map, visited by more than 3,200 people last year, is on the Health Department's website at:

http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/bg_algae/weekly_status.aspx

Lakeshore or private pond owners can test for both coliform bacterial contamination and cyanobacteria toxins by purchasing kits from the Health Department Laboratory call: 800-660-9997.

Local swimming holes are also a great natural resource, but can be more of a risk for drowning due to unpredictable and rapidly changing water conditions, especially after a heavy rainfall. Look, listen and always use common sense wherever you choose to swim this summer. About half of all drowning deaths in the state occur in natural water settings such as lakes and rivers.

To try to prevent more drownings, the Health Department has been hosting a Swimming Hole Safety Committee to work with state government and private partners, including the National Weather Service, to provide advance warnings when swimming conditions may be unsafe.

For more information visit:

Healthy Recreational Waters
<http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/water/recwater.aspx>

Blue Green Algae
http://www.healthvermont.gov/enviro/bg_algae/bgalgae.aspx

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Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
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