



BEACH ADVISORIES



NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF
**Environmental
Services**

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Monitoring Swimming Beaches

Swimming in New Hampshire's lakes, rivers and coastal waters should be an enjoyable and safe experience.

However, these recreational waters can expose swimmers to health hazards, including disease causing bacteria and toxin producing cyanobacteria. To ensure swimmer safety, the NH Department of Environmental Services samples water and inspects public beaches throughout the state during the summer months.

Sample Analysis

Beach water samples are returned to the lab in Concord where a 24-hour bacteria test is performed. Results indicate the levels of fecal bacteria present in the water. If fecal bacteria levels are high, swimmers have a greater risk of coming into contact with disease-causing bacteria.

If NHDES inspectors or the public notice signs of cyanobacteria (bluish-green water, green globs floating in water, scum across water surface) at a beach, samples are collected for analysis. Cyanobacteria type and abundance are microscopically identified by NHDES staff within 24 hours.

Beach Advisories

When bacteria or cyanobacteria levels at a beach exceed the amount allowable by state standards, an advisory is issued. NHDES contacts the manager of the beach, who can either post signs letting the public know about the advisory OR close the beach if they feel that the situation poses a threat to public health. Posted advisory signs indicate the water contaminant (fecal bacteria or cyanobacteria) and list the potential health risks following exposure.

Water samples are collected at beaches with posted advisories until the contaminant levels are no longer above the state standard. The beach advisory is then removed and the signs are taken down OR the beach is re-opened.

How do I know if it's safe to swim?

Pay attention to posted signs at public beaches. Check the NHDES website for current beach advisories. Follow @NHDES_Beaches on Twitter.