



Beach Closures Frequently Asked Questions

E. Coli

The swimming beach is temporarily closed due to E. Coli bacteria levels that exceed state guidelines.

What is E. Coli?

E. Coli (*Escherichia coli*) is a single-celled bacteria with a variety of strains. While most strains are harmless, some can make people sick.

What types of E. Coli bacteria were found in the lake?

Water sample tests can't tell the difference between good or bad strains of E. Coli, but the higher the reported number, the greater the risk that a harmful strain is present. We close a beach area if samples exceed state guidelines.

What causes the elevated E. Coli levels?

Elevated E. Coli levels in lakes can happen after heavy rainfalls and usually return to normal levels within 24-48 hours. In particular, a primary source of bacteria is goose feces that can run off into the swimming area. This runoff can lead to increased E. Coli levels. Warmer water temperatures also mean more bacteria growth and higher levels.

How can I reduce my exposure to E. Coli while swimming?

You can reduce the chances of getting sick from E. Coli while swimming at beaches by:

- Avoiding getting water in your mouth
- Washing hands after swimming and before eating
- Avoiding swimming after significant rainfall

When will the beach reopen?

The beach will re-open once water samples show bacteria levels are back within state guidelines. You can check our website at threeriversparks.org for updates or for information about our other beaches that are open. Thank you for your patience and understanding, and I apologize for the inconvenience.

Swimmer's itch

The swimming beach is temporarily closed due to application of a copper sulfate treatment to reduce the likelihood of swimmer's itch.

What is swimmer's itch?

Swimmer's itch is a skin rash caused by an allergic reaction to a microscopic parasite released in the water by snails. While a beach is closed due to swimmer's itch, a treatment of copper sulfate is applied to the swimming area which kills the snails and the parasites. Once the area is safe, the beach is re-opened to the public.

Are the parasites a threat to people's health?

No. As a part of their life cycle, the parasites that cause swimmer's itch are released by infected snails into the water, where they may come in contact with people and burrow into their skin.

The good news is the organism that causes swimmer's itch cannot complete its life history in the human body. Your body's immune system detects it as a foreign protein, then attacks and kills it shortly after it penetrates your skin. The itching and welts are not caused by the organism living under your skin, but by an allergic reaction.

Not everyone is sensitive to swimmer's itch. Some people show no symptoms even though others swimming at the same time and place break out severely. There are several over the counter remedies your pharmacist can recommend to help relieve the discomfort, but see your physician for a definitive diagnosis.

How can I reduce my chances of getting swimmer's itch?

One way to reduce your chances of contracting swimmer's itch is to rinse off and/or vigorously towel off after exiting the water. You also can apply a water repellant substance such as petroleum jelly, waterproof sunscreen or other skin oils prior to going swimming to reduce the ability of the parasite to penetrate the skin.

Who should I contact if I think I have swimmer's itch?

To report an occurrence of swimmer's itch at one of the Three Rivers Park District beaches, please call the visitor center at the beach location you visited. We rely on reports from swimmers to identify that swimmer's itch is a problem at a beach, so please contact us if you believe you or a family member encountered it after swimming at a Three Rivers beach.

When will the beach reopen?

The beach will re-open 24 hours after the copper sulfate treatment has been applied. You can check our website at threeiverssparks.org for updates or for information about our other beaches that are open. Thank you for your patience and understanding, and I apologize for the inconvenience.