**Rain raises E. coli levels in the Chattahoochee to dangerously high levels**

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ATLANTA — The rain can be an inconvenience in many ways, but it can also be dangerous. From downed trees to power outages to higher levels of E. coli, rising waters can pose a threat.

After the massive amounts of rain across the metro Atlanta area over the past several days, the waters of Chattahoochee River are registering E. coli levels five times greater what is considered high risk.

Most of that bacteria is being carried into the river by fecal matter. It’s gross enough to think about swimming in waters contaminated with fecal matter, but it is even worse to know that’s where most of our drinking water comes from.

Many people are loving the rain the area has been seeing.

“I pray for rain because I feel like, in Georgia, we had such a drought for a long time,” Virginia Willis, who exercises along the Chattahoochee River daily told **Channel 2′s Matt Johnson**.

After learning about the rising bacteria levels, Willis says she is making sure to stay away from the river.

“That’s a problem, and we have to work to keep our water sources clean,” she said.

**Channel 2 Action News Chief Meteorologist Glenn Burns**says the problem is the rainwater that’s going back into the river is picking up contaminants on the way.

“We have a lot of runoff and that runoff is coming off land that’s filled unfortunately going out, how to put this delicately, with a lot of feces, animal feces, and even wastewater treatment plants could overflow with this kind of rain,” Burns said.

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Jason Ulseth is monitoring E. coli levels and urging people to avoid the water.

“It can cause rashes, eye infections, ear infections, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, those types of conditions,” said Ulseth.

Ulseth says that it will take a few days after the rain for the bacteria to leave the water, and you’ll know it just by looking at the color.

“We need to avoid water contact when it does look like chocolate milk, when we do know that we’re going to have these high levels of E. coli,” he said.

You can monitor real-time updates on the E. coli levels in the Chattahoochee River [here](https://chattahoochee.org/).