
Where does the contamination come from?

Bacteria in recreational waters (bathing beaches) can come from a variety of sources. Potential sources of *E. coli* bacteria that may contaminate our bathing beaches in Kalamazoo County include:

- ◆ Malfunctioning onsite sewage disposal systems (septic systems)
- ◆ Sanitary sewer overflows & sewer line break discharges
- ◆ Polluted stormwater runoff (precipitation)
- ◆ Boating waste
- ◆ Wildlife concentrations, particularly ducks, geese, swans, and gulls
- ◆ Animal and human waste

In Kalamazoo County, elevated bacteria levels at bathing beaches are most often associated with rain events.

Where are water sample results posted?

Current bacteriological results and information about statewide beach monitoring can be found at the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality beach monitoring website. Check out www.deq.state.mi.us/beach



Who can I contact for additional beach monitoring information?

For additional information about the Bathing Beach Monitoring Program, contact the Kalamazoo County Environmental Health Division at:

Phone: (269) 373-5337

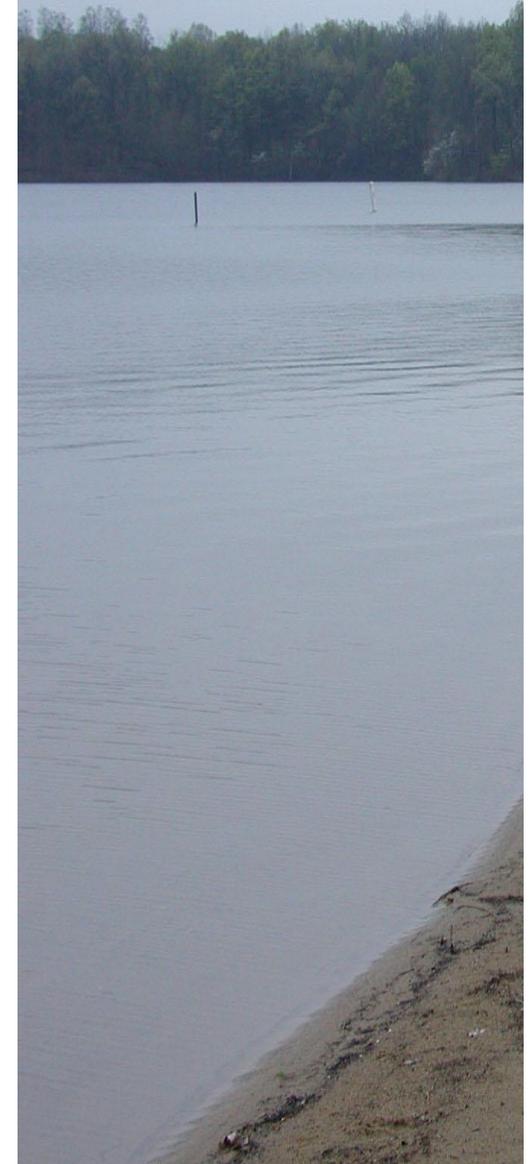
Website: www.kalcounty.com/eh



Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department programs are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

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Kalamazoo County Bathing Beach Monitoring Program



Is water quality of bathing beaches monitored in Kalamazoo County?

Yes, the Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department (KCHCSD) conducts weekly bathing beach monitoring between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Why does KCHCSD monitor bathing beaches?

1. Assure a safe and healthy recreational experience at Kalamazoo County bathing beaches
2. Determine compliance to Michigan's Water Quality Standards for total body contact recreation (swimming)
3. Protect public exposure to surface water that does not meet Michigan's Water Quality Standards

Even though the water at the beach may look good and very clean, there may be disease-causing microorganisms present. These microorganisms, if ingested, can make you and your family sick.

What is analyzed in the water sample?

All bathing beach water samples are analyzed for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria, an organism that indicates the presence of animal

and human waste. While *E. coli* itself poses a minimal health threat to swimmers, it can indicate the presence of other dangerous microorganisms that can cause illness.



How are water samples analyzed?

The Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department Laboratory, a Michigan certified laboratory, performs bacteriological analysis using Colilert-18[®] and Quanti-Tray/2000[™]. This method provides easy, rapid (results in 18 hours), and accurate counts of *E. coli* bacteria in bathing beach water. Refer to www.idexx.com for additional information.

What does it mean when a public health advisory is issued?

A public health advisory is issued when the monitoring conducted by the Environmental Health Department determines that bacteria levels exceed the limits set

by Michigan's Water Quality Standards. If either the single-day (one event) or thirty-day average (at least five events) bacteria count exceeds the established limit, a public health advisory for total body contact may be issued.

What could happen to me if I swim in bathing beach water with elevated levels of bacteria?

Exposure to bacteria in the water can cause symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea, stomach cramps, chills, and fever. Skin rashes and infections of eyes, ears, nose, and throat may also occur.

Children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems have a greater chance of becoming sick when they come into contact with contaminated water. If you experience any of these symptoms, you should contact your physician.

When will a public health advisory be lifted?

The Environmental Health Department will continue monitoring water quality and will lift the public health advisory when the *E. coli* bacteria levels comply with Michigan's Water Quality Standards for total body contact recreation.