

## EXAMPLE BEACH ADVISORY SIGN

Signs like the one below, are placed in beach areas where bacteria sample results exceed safe levels.



When bacteria levels exceed health standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the public is notified and advisories are posted at the particular beach site. **Swimming advisories remain in effect until samples show that bacteria is below safe levels.**

For local and state wide beach water testing results visit:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-epidemiology/beach-monitoring/>

OR

<https://watersgeo.epa.gov/beam2/>

For more helpful tips for staying safe and healthy while swimming visit:

[www.swimhealthyva.com](http://www.swimhealthyva.com)

Follow us on Twitter  
[@VDHBeach](https://twitter.com/VDHBeach)



Contact your local VDH monitoring staff at:



## COASTAL BEACH MONITORING PROGRAM



TIPS FOR  
A SAFE DAY AT THE  
BEACH



The Virginia Department of Health wants you to have a fun and safe day at the beach! Local health departments visit about 50 beach sites weekly from May through September, testing coastal waters for a bacteria called **enterococcus**.

Enterococcus is found in the intestines of healthy people and warm-blooded animals, and is used as an indicator of fecal contamination in saltwater.

When high levels are detected, it may indicate the presence of potentially harmful organisms which can cause recreational water illnesses.



Recreational water illness can cause gastrointestinal symptoms that include vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain in addition to upper respiratory infections (ear, nose, and throat), skin rashes, and wound infections.

Beach water samples are collected weekly from May to September.



Young children, the elderly, or those with a weakened immune system are more vulnerable to recreational water illnesses.



## TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH WHILE SWIMMING

1. Avoid swimming in water with an unusual or **bad odor**, appears **stagnant**, or is visibly **muddy**.
2. Observe **posted warning signs** near swimming areas.
3. Avoid swimming near **pipes, fishing piers, or water flowing from storm drains** onto the beach.
4. Prevent **children and pets from swallowing water** while swimming.
5. **Don't swim** if you are **ill** or have a **weakened immune system**.
6. Avoid swimming in water for a few days after **heavy rainfall**.
7. Use appropriate **toilet facilities** and **properly discard trash, pet waste, and dirty diapers**.
8. Don't swim if **dead fish** are present.
9. **Shower** with soap and water after swimming.
10. Prevent direct contact of **cuts and open wounds** with water or use **waterproof bandages**.
11. **Contact your local health department**, if **water contamination** is suspected.