



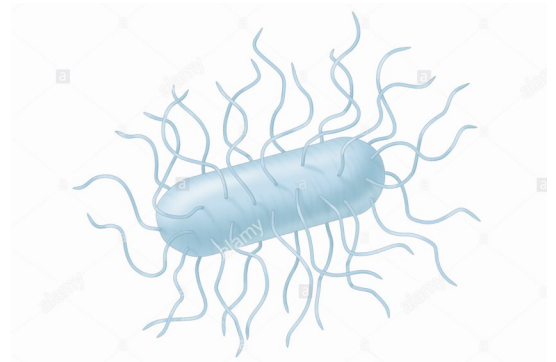
# Recreational Water Sampling

## A FACT GUIDE

Recreational water use is popular in the Municipality of Grey Highlands. These activities can deliver significant benefits to health and well-being. Yet, there is the possibility of injury or illness resulting from recreational use if the water is polluted or unsafe.



Human illness and infection can be caused by organisms (bacteria, viruses, and parasites) that may be within natural bodies of water.





# Is it safe to swim?

Beaches in Grey Highlands have a history of being safe. However, water quality can change from day to day, or even hour to hour, depending on the weather and other conditions. High bacteria levels usually occur due to weather-related events. The Municipality encourages beachgoers to make an informed decision about beach water quality in real-time before they go swimming. You are the best judge of whether the water is safe to swim!

1. Is the beach posted with a warning sign?



**Do not swim.**

2. Has there been heavy rainfall in the last 24 to 48 hours? If so, bacteria levels may be higher.



**Do not swim.**

3. Can you see your feet at adult waist depth? If so, cloudy water can mean that bacterial levels may be higher.



**Do not swim.**

4. Are there any other problems with the beach, such as many waterfowl, dead fish, algae/scum, or dangerous debris, etc.?



**Do not swim.**

If you answered **YES** to any one of the four questions, you should **NOT** swim. The water may have high levels of bacteria that could increase the risk of skin, eye, ear, nose and throat infections or gastrointestinal illness.

# Our Water Safety Signage

A beach will be posted with different signs when the beach is not safe for swimming. The signs are displayed in prominent positions at the beach to warn bathers of the danger.



**SWIM ADVISORY**  
**SWIM AT YOUR OWN  
RISK**



**ADVISORY LIFTED**

Beach warning signs are removed  
after the E.coli levels or conditions  
return to acceptable levels.





# Total Coliform Testing

**Total coliforms** are a group of bacteria that are widespread. All members of the total coliform group can occur in human feces, but some can also be present in animal manure, soil, submerged wood and other places outside the human body.

**You can help keep the beaches clean by following these few simple tips:**

- Not feeding animals or birds
- Observing local "stoop and scoop" by-laws and always pick up your pet's waste
- Practicing pollution-free boating and disposing of human waste appropriately
- Keeping your private sewage disposal system in good working order.
- Stay away from the water if you are experiencing digestive or intestinal problems



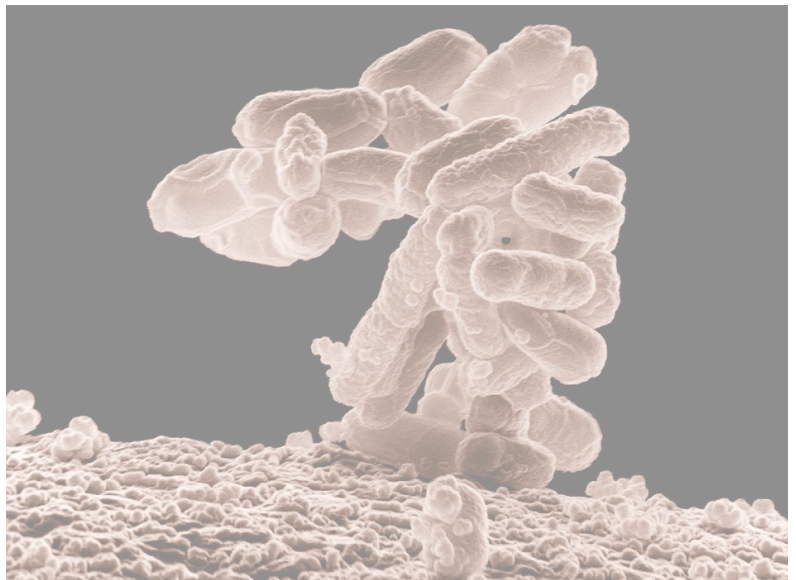


# E. coli Testing

**E. coli** is a type of fecal coliform bacteria commonly found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals and humans. E. coli is short for Escherichia coli. The presence of E. coli in water is a strong indication of recent sewage or animal waste contamination. Sewage may contain many types of disease-causing organisms.

Note: Beaches are only monitored for E. coli levels seasonal and storm surface run-off into rivers and lakes. Results can be affected by:

- Pet waste run-off
- Large populations of water-fowl (geese, seagulls, etc.)
- Warm water temperatures
- Malfunctioning private sewage disposal systems
- Boating wastes
- Agricultural manure run-off





# Resources

- Municipality of Grey Highlands – Water Testing

<https://www.greyhighlands.ca/en/visit-and-explore/lakes.aspx>

- Federal Regulations – Water Testing

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/guidelines-canadian-recreational-water-quality-third-edition.html>

## Contact Us

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