



Stay Well in the Water

South Carolina's Beach Monitoring Program

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) routinely collects water samples from more than 100 locations on state beaches. If DHEC finds high levels of bacteria in a sample, the agency issues an advisory for that section of the beach. This means that DHEC cautions people not to swim in the water in that area. It's especially important for young children and people with weak immune systems to stay out of the water during an advisory. But an advisory does not mean that the beach is closed. Wading, fishing, and shell collecting are still safe for most people. Advisories are lifted when new samples show that bacteria levels are safe. For up-to-date advisory information, check the beach community's local newspaper or go to <http://www.earth911.com>.



South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control

www.scdhec.gov/beach

To stay healthy at the beach:

Pay attention to advisories; avoid swimming in the areas listed in advisories.

Wading, fishing, and shell collecting are not a risk unless you have open sores or lesions. Bacteria can get into open sores and cause an infection. Typically, though, health problems come from swallowing the water.

Do not swim or allow children to play in swashes or near stormwater pipes.

Although shallow pools of water and small streams on the beach seem like good places for children to play, they are NOT. They are caused by swashes and stormwater runoff. They often contain much higher levels of bacteria than the ocean.

Do not swim in the ocean during or immediately after a heavy rain.

Wait at least 12 hours after a heavy rain to swim in the ocean. Heavy rains can wash bacteria and other harmful germs into the surf. High bacteria levels can stay in the surf for hours and may increase a swimmer's risk of illness. Although swimming isn't safe, it's OK for most people to wade in the water during or after a downpour. But you shouldn't do this in a thunderstorm or if you have sores or lesions on your legs or feet.

