



# Swimming after a Storm

**Water may be unsafe for swimming after a storm.** This is because lakes, rivers, and streams can be contaminated with bacteria, viruses, and chemicals. The extra rainwater can cause sewage systems to overflow, and the sewage can end up in the water. Strong winds can stir up contamination that had settled to the bottom.

## **How can I tell when the water is safe?**

You can't tell by looking; only by testing. The safest approach is to swim at a beach with a lifeguard on duty.

- The water at supervised beaches is tested regularly between late June and late August to make sure it is safe.
- The beach is closed when the water is not safe.

## What happens if I swim in contaminated water?

People often swallow some water when they swim. Swallowed water can make you sick. It may give you diarrhea or cause an infection in your throat or lungs. You may also get a rash, or an infection in cuts or sores. Contaminated water can also cause an infection in your eyes, ears, or nose.

## How can I tell when the water is safe at a swimming spot with no lifeguard?

The only way to be sure water is safe is to test it. Many beaches and swimming spots in Nova Scotia have no lifeguard. The water may be calm and clear, but may still be contaminated. Cloudy water and reeds can hide glass and rocks. The safest choice is to use a supervised beach, especially after a big storm.

### To find beaches with lifeguards:

- in Nova Scotia, visit [www.nsls.ns.ca/supervised-beaches](http://www.nsls.ns.ca/supervised-beaches)
- in HRM, visit <http://halifax.ca/rec/beaches.html>

**Obey “No Swimming” signs at closed beaches.**

You can find information on beaches under a “No Swimming” advisory at [www.nsls.ns.ca](http://www.nsls.ns.ca)

and find the results of water tests at [www.nsls.ns.ca](http://www.nsls.ns.ca)