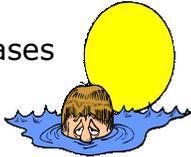




Viruses are believed to be the major cause of swimming-associated illnesses, & are responsible for gastroenteritis, hepatitis, respiratory illness, & ear, nose, & throat problems.

Other microbial diseases that can be contracted by swimmers include salmonellosis, shigellosis, giardiasis, amoebic dysentery, skin rashes, "pink eye," & infection caused by *E. coli*.



The most common symptoms are nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, itching, skin rashes & fever.

These diseases rarely threaten human life, however they can lead to significant physical discomfort.



The physical consequences of these diseases can be more significant for select members of the general population, such as children, elderly persons, & persons with weakened immune systems.



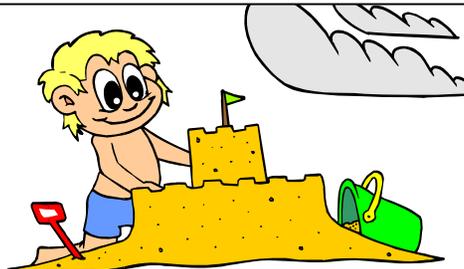
The Mount Desert Island Water Quality Coalition, a nonprofit organization, is supported and driven by island residents, businesses and visitors alike. We believe working cooperatively with the wide diversity of people who have a stake in the quality of MDI's water is the only way to achieve our goals.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Contact the MDI Water Quality Coalition**  
 (207) 288-2598  
 P.O. Box 911  
 Mt. Desert, ME 04660  
[www.mdiwqc.org](http://www.mdiwqc.org)

**This pamphlet was created with support from:**

- MDI Biological Laboratory
- Community Environmental Health Laboratory
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Friends of Acadia





## WAYS TO AVOID SWIMMING-ASSOCIATED ILLNESS:

- Avoid swallowing water or exposing open wounds to beach water.
- Swim at monitored beaches with posted test results.
- Avoid storm water discharge pipes.
- Avoid swimming for long periods in shallow water.
- Do not encourage birds to stay in your area by feeding them.
- Towel off immediately after leaving the water & shower when you're done swimming.
- Don't swim after a heavy rain.



### **Did you know...**

- Many coastal communities don't regularly test their recreational beach waters for bacteria that could make you sick?
- Many communities don't have routine procedures for notifying the public when beach waters are unsafe for swimming?
- The public has no guarantee that the beaches they visit are healthy places to play & swim?
- Every year, thousands of people get sick from swimming in contaminated water?



## SWIMMING-ASSOCIATED ILLNESSES:

**RASHES**-- most rashes aren't serious, lasting only a few days to a week. Signs & symptoms include raised, red patches of skin that itch, burn, tingle, or are sore or numb; itchy, red skin that can be flaky or blistered; small red bumps on the arms, legs, chest, or buttocks; or may appear yellow as crust forms.

**SWIMMERS ITCH**-- characterized by large, raised, itching, red bumps.

**GASTROENTERITIS**-- commonly causes frequent bowel movements, cramping, weakness & all-over body aches, nausea & vomiting, diarrhea, bloating, flu-like symptoms, headache, fever, chills, & dehydration.

**SALMONELLA (SALMONELLOSIS)**-- causes gastroenteritis, characterized by mild-severe diarrhea, fever, & occasional vomiting.

**SHIGELLA (SHIGELLOSIS)**— symptoms include mild-severe diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle pain, cramping, tenderness, chills, fever, & traces of blood or mucus in stool.

**HEPATITIS**-- is a disorder in which viruses or other mechanisms produce inflammation in liver cells, resulting in their injury or destruction.

**GIARDIASIS**-- symptoms include diarrhea, abdominal pain, abdominal fullness, gaseousness or bloating, nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, headache, & a low grade fever.

**RESPIRATORY ILLNESS**--symptoms include clear, thin, watery mucus, coughing, difficulty breathing, headaches, hives, itching of the nose, mouth, eyes, throat, skin, or any area, skin rashes, & sneezing.

**PINK EYE**-- The bacteria that most commonly cause infectious pink eye are staphylococci, pneumococci, & streptococci. Symptoms include eye pain, swelling, redness, & a moderate to large amount of discharge, usually yellow or greenish in color.



## HELP KEEP OUR BEACHES SAFE:

### **In Your Home:**

- Correctly dispose of hazardous household products & use nontoxic household products whenever possible.



- Recycle & dispose of all trash properly.
- Conserve water.



### **In Your Yard:**

- Use natural fertilizers.
- Avoid over-watering lawns & gardens.
- Sweep driveways and sidewalks instead of hosing them down.
- Maintain septic systems properly.
- Take children to restrooms as often as needed. Don't allow children or pets to urinate or defecate in the water or on paved surfaces.



### **Maintaining Your Car/Truck/Boat:**

- Recycle used motor oil.
- Keep your car/truck/boat in good condition by keeping up with maintenance.
- Hand-wash your car on the lawn with a bucket of water and biodegradable soap, rags, & a hose. Or, if you don't want to do it yourself, choose a car wash that recycles its water.
- Wash your boat with phosphate-free soap or detergent.

