

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Savannah Bergman, BS
Chemist-Microbiologist
715-839-2870

savannah.bergman@co.eau-claire.wi.us



Health Department beach water quality testing begins for summer

Eau Claire, WI, May 24th, 2019 – The Health Department kicks off summer by beginning their beach monitoring program. They monitor seven local beaches for bacteria and harmful algae blooms throughout the summer, ending Labor Day weekend. Beaches include Riverview Park, Big Falls, Half Moon Lake, Lake Altoona, Lake Eau Claire, Coon Fork Beach and Coon Fork Campground.

A sign will be placed on the beach if beaches are closed or have an advisory. The Health Department will also post up-to-date information on their Facebook and Twitters accounts.

“Although a beach closure or a water quality advisory may ruin your plans, it’s for the safety of everyone in our community, especially children, the elderly and pets,” says Savannah Bergman, Chemist-Microbiologist.

Curious about the difference between a beach closing and advisory? Read below.

	Beach closings	Water quality advisories (posted for algae blooms)
		 <p>About algae blooms: -Can look like thick green paint floating on the water (or other colors like blue, green, white, red, or brown) -Can be smelly -Usually appear July-September (especially when it’s hot and rainy)</p>
How often does it happen?	36 days (2018)	91 days (2018)
What causes a closing/advisory?	Beaches are closed when testing shows high levels of bacteria .	Advisories are posted when harmful algae blooms are seen in the water .
Why should I avoid the water?	High levels of bacteria in the water can make you and your family sick. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swallowing water can cause diarrhea, nausea, fever and stomach pain. 	Harmful algae blooms can be toxic, especially to children and pets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Touching algae can cause skin rash and/or ear, nose and throat irritation. - Swallowing small amounts of algae can cause headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
Can I still use the beach if a sign is posted?	No. The beach is closed for ALL water activities.	Maybe... Don’t boat, swim, touch, or swallow the water near the algae bloom. Try to find an area of the beach where there isn’t algae.
When is the beach “safe” again?	Beach will open when bacteria levels return to acceptable levels.	Advisory will be taken down once harmful algae levels return to acceptable levels.

Questions about beach safety in Eau Claire County? Call us at 715-839-4718

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