



# Keeping Water Safe for Swimming



May 21-27, 2007 is the third annual Recreational Water Illness Prevention week.

The week before Memorial Day signals the start of the traditional summer swimming season and was chosen as a great time to bring attention to safe and healthy swimming.

The Berrien County Health Department has for the past several years participated in a statewide Lake Michigan beach monitoring program. Funded

by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, this important activity keeps the citizens of Berrien County aware of any dangerous water-borne bacteria problems. Water samples are collected at thirteen (13) public beaches across the entire coastline beginning at the south near the Indiana state line traveling north to the Van Buren County line. Some of the most popular beaches include: Jean Klock Park (Benton Harbor city), Tiscornia Park (St.

Joseph city), Silver Beach (Berrien County park), Weko Beach (Bridgman city park), and Warren Dunes State Park (State of Michigan). Many visitors are keenly aware of beach water quality due to television and newspaper articles about beach closings from Indiana and Illinois. Tourists who wish to visit Berrien County's beautiful coast can access water results by using the internet (website [www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/public](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/public)).

## Berrien County Health

**Department:**  
Preventing Disease,  
Prolonging Life and  
Protecting the  
Health of the  
Community.



## SUMMER SAFETY

May is Summer Safety Month and the Berrien County Health Department will be giving you information throughout the month on summer health issues such as Lyme disease, melanoma or skin cancer detection and prevention, recreational water illness prevention, boater safety, etc. Look for the Benton Spirit Health Page in the weeks to come for more information on keeping your summer healthy and happy!

### Baby Pool Safety Tips

*By the Water Quality & Health Council*

1. Never leave children alone and unattended. Children can drown in as little as one inch of water.
2. Keep emergency phone numbers ready and know CPR.
3. Change pool water regularly. Frequent use of baby pools leads to build up of dirt and bacteria.
4. Children should wear tight-fitting plastic pants around diapers or pool-safe diapers.
5. When taking a break, completely empty the baby pool to protect against drowning.

## Is that Water Clean?



What is in the surface water that is important to the swimmers' health? Coliform bacteria is associated with waste material from humans and is present in dirty water. Waste material from farms or municipal sewage that flows into the lake can also be a very real concern for swimmers. Another bacteria, Escherichia coli (E. coli), in the water is linked to swimming-associated stomach infection called gastroenteritis. Gastroenteritis shows symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and headache lasting 24 to 48 hours.

Another problem for bathers could be found at a hotel or campground in indoor or out-

door public swimming pools. Pools can harbor bacteria, viruses and parasites including E. coli and "Crypto". Crypto is short for cryptosporidium, a parasite that is not easily destroyed by chlorine. Crypto primarily produces a symptom of diarrhea. It becomes quite obvious how crypto or other pool bacteria and viruses could sabotage a perfectly planned vacation!

The Health Department cannot overstate the importance of taking a thorough shower with plenty of soap before entering a pool and when you are done swimming. This is the best way to protect yourself from getting sick from unclean water.

## BCHD Water Inspection

Outbreaks of recreational water illnesses occur across the country. According to the Center for Disease Control, 62% of outbreaks are related to chlorine-resistant pathogen, cryptosporidium (crypto) and the re-

maining 38% of problems are related to poor pool cleaning.

Public swimming pools are inspected by public health sanitarians in Berrien County at least once a year. In 2006, 47 public indoor pools and spas

and 103 public outdoor pools and spas were inspected.

For more information on the Lake Michigan Beach monitoring program or the program of inspecting swimming pools, contact the Health Department at 927-5623.



*The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:*

### Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone  
P.O. Box 706  
926-7121

M-139 Office  
2106 S. M-139  
927-5623

School Based  
870 Colfax Ave  
925-4500

### Niles

1205 N. Front St.  
684-2800

### Three Oaks

21 N. Elm  
756-2008

Or visit us on the web at [www.berriencohthdept.org](http://www.berriencohthdept.org)

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