

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Safer Use of Beaches During COVID-19

NIPISSING & PARRY SOUND, ON – As the warmer weather approaches and individuals start to use area waters, folks are reminded to continue to follow public health measures and provincial requirements under the Shutdown and Stay-At-Home Order.

Under the current Stay-At-Home Order, everyone is to remain home except for essential purposes, such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services (including getting vaccinated), exercising outdoors, or for work that cannot be done remotely. Swimming can be a great outdoor activity as long as public health measures are followed.

Current research suggests the risk of transmission from recreational waters is very low. However, COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when in close contact with others. It is common to see people swimming and playing in the water in close proximity of one another and the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is greater if physical distancing is not maintained.

If you plan to attend a beach:

- Limit travel and use beaches close to your own communities, when possible.
- Use an alternate beach if the beach is crowded.
- Do not go to the beach if you or any member of your household is experiencing any [symptoms](#) (i.e. fever, cough, difficulty breathing, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose) or if you have come into contact with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms.
- Practice physical distancing – stay two (2) metres from others who do not reside in your home or where you are living, and if you live alone, physically distance from anyone outside your exclusive close contact home. This includes while on the beach and in the water.
- Wear a face covering indoors and outdoors as required and whenever physical distancing is difficult. Do not wear a face covering to swim.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often. Bring alcohol-based hand sanitizer and make sure you sanitize your hands when arriving at the beach and before eating or drinking.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

The Health Unit is reminding the public that bacteriological testing of beach water will not begin until mid-June. Water may contain high levels of bacteria for up to 48 hours following heavy rainfall. If the water has high levels of bacteria, you may get ear, nose, eye, and throat irritations, and stomach disorders. Please stay out of the water after it rains.

Please contact the Environmental Health Program at [1-800-563-2808](tel:1-800-563-2808) ext. 5400 with any questions about beach water quality.

## Media Inquiries:

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