

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

July 14, 2016

Island Lake swimming beaches to remain closed due to E.coli ***Health District investigating cause of unusually high bacteria levels***

KITSAP COUNTY, WA—Swimming beaches will remain closed until further notice at Island Lake County Park and Island Lake Crista Camp due to high levels of E.coli bacteria in the water. Residents who live on or near Island Lake are encouraged to avoid contact with lake water.

The Kitsap Public Health District closed the lake on Wed., July 13 after water samples taken July 12 showed unusually high E.coli levels. Results from samples taken July 13 again show unusually high E.coli levels, with the highest being 2,419 CFU/100ml (Colony Forming Units). The Washington State Department of Health closure level for E.coli is 126 CFU/100ml.

Since there is an increased risk of getting sick the public is advised to avoid all contact with the water in Island Lake until further notice. This means no swimming, wading, or types of water play where water could be swallowed or get in the mouth, nose or eyes. Pets should also stay out of the water. The risk of illness is greatest for young children, the elderly, or anyone with a compromised immune system.

High levels of E.coli bacteria can be caused by a number of things, including but not limited to wildlife and pets in the water, people swimming when they are sick, a large number of swimmers, and infants swimming without swim diapers. However, because of the unusually high bacterial levels in the lake, the Health District is investigating other possible sources.

Closure signs have been posted for both swimming beaches. This public health advisory will remain in effect until bacteria levels in the lake return to safe levels. The Health District will test the lake again next Tues., July 19, and will provide an update on Wed., July 20 on the District's website (kitsappublichealth.org/beaches), and through electronic alerts (kitsappublichealth.org/subscribe).

No illnesses have been reported to Kitsap Public Health at this time. To report a waterborne illness other than swimmer's itch, the public is asked to call the Kitsap Public Health (360) 337-5235 or submit information on-line at kitsappublichealth.org. Healthcare providers seeing patients this summer with gastrointestinal symptoms should inquire about recent contact with water bodies and report suspected cases of water-borne illness to Kitsap Public Health. This helps identify potentially contaminated sites as early as possible.

Kitsap Public Health monitors 26 lake swimming areas and 15 salt water swimming beaches for algae and bacteria levels to help keep Kitsap swimmers safe.

Water-borne illnesses aren't just an issue in lakes and beaches. Contrary to popular belief, chlorine does not kill all germs instantly. There are germs today that are very tolerant to chlorine and were not known to cause human disease until recently. Once these germs get in the pool, it can take anywhere from minutes to days for chlorine to kill them. Swallowing just a little water that contains these germs can make you sick. Public pools and spas are tested by Kitsap Public Health year-round.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) promotes these easy and effective steps all of us can take each time we swim:

- Keep the pee, poop, and sweat out of the water!
- Don't swim if you are sick or have diarrhea or if you have been sick in the last 48 hours.
- Shower before you get in the water.
- Don't swallow the water.
- Every hour—everyone out!
- Take kids on bathroom breaks.
- Use swim diapers.
- Check diapers frequently, and change them in a bathroom or diaper-changing area to keep germs away from the water.

###

For more information, please contact:

Karen McKay Bevers | Public Information Officer

Kitsap Public Health District

345 6th St., Suite 300 | Bremerton, WA 98337

(360) 307-4252 Office | (360) 337-5235 Main

karen.bevers@kitsappublichealth.org | kitsappublichealth.org