BEACH CONDITIONS TO SEPTEMBER 6

Water testing this week has shown that levels of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) were within recreational water quality guidelines at most beaches monitored by Manitoba Sustainable Development.

*Escherichia coli* counts were above the recreational water quality objective on Lake Winnipeg at Milne Beach on September 4. Lake Winnipeg advisory signs remain posted at Milne Beach.

*Escherichia coli* returned to acceptable levels at Birds Hill Park West Beach and advisory signs were rescinded on September 6.

Bathers are advised to avoid swallowing lake water, wash hands before handling food, and avoid swimming with an open cut or wound, or while experiencing illness. On Lake Winnipeg, bathers should minimize water contact if lake levels are high and strong winds are blowing from the north. Research shows *E. coli* counts tend to be elevated during these conditions as they are washed out of the wet beach sand and into the bathing area.

Algal blooms were sampled this week at Victoria Beach (Clubhouse and Red Cross Dock) on Lake Winnipeg. The number of blue-green algae cells was above the recreational water quality objective but the concentration of the algal toxin microcystin was below the recreational objective at both beaches. First level algae advisory signs are posted at both beaches.

Algal blooms are difficult to predict and may form and then disperse quickly or last for several days or weeks. Warm and calm weather coupled with relatively high nutrient loads provide ideal conditions for blue-green algae to develop. People are reminded to avoid swimming in water where severe algal blooms are visible and to prevent pets from drinking water along the shoreline where algal blooms are present. Home and cottage owners who use lake water as a source for drinking water should be aware that most small treatment systems are unable to remove algal toxins. Therefore, where blue-green algal blooms are present, avoid drinking the water or using it for other domestic purposes.

Information on beach water quality results, advisory signs posted at beaches, and swimmer and water safety is available at: manitoba.ca/beaches.
Please note this is the final weekly beach conditions report for 2018.