

WHY WE SAMPLE BREAKDOWN

IS YOUR LOCAL WATER SAFE FOR SWIMMING?



While the water may look beautifully clear and blue, it may also contain microscopic chemicals or pathogens that can be harmful to humans. At Miami Waterkeeper, we routinely check the water for bacteria levels at key recreation areas and publish our results on our free Swim Guide app, on social media, and on our website to keep you informed.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT WATER QUALITY?

Water quality is a concern because bacteria and viruses associated with the indicators we test for can affect human health, particularly the very young, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems. Swimming in water with high levels of bacteria can cause illnesses such as:

- gastrointestinal distress
- skin irritation
- irritation of eyes and ears

WHAT ARE SWIM ADVISORIES?

Swim advisories are notices published by the Florida Department of Health to let water users know about water quality. These advisories are based on standards from the Environmental Protection Agency following a series of rigorous studies examining recreational water quality and risk exposure. When you see a swim advisory posted, it is best to adhere to its recommendations.

WHAT ARE FECAL INDICATOR BACTERIA (FIB)?

FIBs are bacteria associated with pathogenic bacteria and viruses common in fecal material. They indicate that pathogenic bacteria and viruses could be present, but FIBs do not necessarily cause illnesses. *E.coli* is the recommended indicator for fresh water; enterococci is recommended for saltwater.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF FIBS?

The presence of FIBs does not always mean that human fecal material is the source. Other sources include:

- dogs
- wildlife
- birds
- stormwater

FIBs can also be part of the environment; they can remain long after initially being contributed in places like sand, sediment or seaweed.

WHICH CONDITIONS LEAD TO HIGHER FIBS?

Higher FIBs have been demonstrated to occur more frequently at beaches with

- low wave action
- low slope
- many beachgoers
- many dogs
- many birds
- large volumes of seaweed
- strong winds
- following heavy rainfall
- when sand or sediment has been dispersed and suspended in the water