



SCOTT W. LINDQUIST, MD, MPH, DIRECTOR
345 6TH STREET, SUITE 300
BREMERTON, WA 98337-1866
(360) 337-5235

News Release

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CONTACT: Scott Daniels
(360) 337-5287
(360) 271-9230

Results Inconclusive Regarding Illnesses in Swimmers at Horseshoe Lake

BREMERTON, WA — The Kitsap County Health District is continuing to investigate reports of stomach-related illness from people who swam at several county lakes during last week's heat wave. Approximately 30 cases were reported overall. As of today, the cause of the illnesses has not yet been identified and, except for Kitsap Lake, all public lake swimming beaches remain open. Kitsap Lake has been under a health advisory since July 17, due to a toxic blue-green algae bloom in the lake. Direct water contact at Kitsap Lake is strongly discouraged until the algae bloom has subsided.

The reported stomach-related illnesses have generally consisted of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea or abdominal pain from people who swam primarily at Horseshoe Lake in south Kitsap County on July 29. Although reports also have been made by people who visited Wildcat and Long lakes, Horseshoe Lake has had the most reports (23), and is the only lake at this time with multiple reports from multiple families. As a result, the Health District is focusing its efforts only at Horseshoe Lake at this time.

Water samples collected from the Horseshoe Lake County Park swimming area yesterday continue to be below federally-established action levels for *E.coli* bacteria at swimming beaches. Stool samples from ill people who swam at area lakes last week, including individuals who swam Horseshoe Lake, all tested negative for bacteria and parasites. Additional samples from these individuals are pending lab analysis for Norovirus, a common intestinal virus. Although illnesses were reported by swimmers at Horseshoe Lake County Park, no swimmers at a private summer camp on the lake have reported illnesses.

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To date, none of the reported illnesses have required hospitalization, symptoms appear to be mild and flu-like, and full recovery in all cases is expected.

According to Scott Lindquist, MD, Kitsap County Health Officer, "Once all the lab tests are back, we will have a clearer picture of what actually caused these illnesses. I am thankful we have the resources to undertake this investigation".

The Health District reminds the public that although swimming is a healthy and fun activity, especially when it's hot outside, it does involve people in close proximity sharing the same water. As such, it is imperative that people follow these precautions:

- Avoid ingesting water from lakes, creeks, and marine waters.
- Do not go swimming if you are ill or have diarrhea.
- Individuals in diapers should not enter the water.
- Do not urinate or defecate in the water.
- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after going to the bathroom or changing a diaper.
- When swimming, take young children on frequent bathroom breaks.
- If ill, see a health care provider to be checked out as soon as possible.

If you become ill with nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea or abdominal pain after swimming at a local beach, the Health District would like you to report the illness by leaving a message at (360) 337-5623. Please leave your name, phone number, and date of the call, and the Health District will return your call within 24 hours to gather additional information.

The Health District will continue to track and investigate illness reports and issue health advisories if necessary. For more information, visit the Health District's website at www.kitsapcountyhealth.com, or call the District at (360) 337-5285 Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

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