



ROAD TO
A HEALTHY
MICHIGAN



Waterborne
Disease

DETOUR AHEAD

Facts:

- Most waterborne diseases cause diarrheal illness. Eighty-eight percent of diarrhea cases worldwide are linked to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation or insufficient hygiene. These cases result in 1.5 million deaths each year, mostly in young children.
- Some waterborne diseases do not cause diarrhea; instead these diseases can cause malnutrition, skin infections, and organ damage.
- The United States has one of the safest water supplies in the world; however, the overall prevalence of waterborne illness in the U.S. is unknown.
- Waterborne related disease is the number one killer worldwide.
- The Waterborne Disease and Outbreak Surveillance System collects data on waterborne disease and outbreaks associated with recreational water, drinking water, environmental and undetermined water exposures.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Waterborne Disease Prevention Branch mission includes:
 - Tracking waterborne disease nationally
 - Investigating the cause and sources of waterborne disease and outbreaks
 - Identification of the risk factors for infection
 - Developing improved laboratory detection and sampling methods
 - Developing new ways to remove or inactivate pathogens
 - Assessing new prevention ideas
 - Promoting improved public health through communication and education
 - Development of guidance and policy

Information Resources:

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

[Waterborne Disease and Outbreak Surveillance System](#)

[Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Water Resources Division](#)



CAUTION

What you should know

- Always wash your hands with soap and clean, warm, running water. This is especially important when you are making or eating food, handling a baby, after using the bathroom, or touching something contaminated with floodwater or sewage.
- All swimmers should stay out of the water when they are ill with diarrhea, even if they are wearing swim diapers or swim pants. They risk contaminating the pool with feces and germs, which can make others sick.
- If you have well water, make sure that the source is protected from sewage systems and from above ground sources of contamination such as fertilizers, oils and other chemicals. Have it tested regularly for bacterial contamination. Make sure that your well water drilling company is licensed and approved by public health officials.
- If you want to know how your bottled water is treated for contamination, check the label for a toll-free number or webpage address. This may be a source of further information. There is currently no standardized label for bottled water.

