

Out of Season Bathing Know the Risks



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Open water swimming, at sea or in lakes and rivers, has both physical and mental health benefits for us all. During the colder seasons, there is an increased risks of water-borne illness, due to less favourable water quality resulting from increased rainfall and lower UV light outside of summer.



- Heavy Rainfall
- No Lifeguards
- Rough Water
- Cold-water shock
- Hyperventilation & Tachycardia
- Hypothermia & Muscle Cramping
- Drowning



Increased Risks of Waterborne Illness



Greater runoff of pollutants into the seas, rivers and lakes, during winter and autumn months can increase the presence of harmful bugs. This means a higher risk of picking up a waterborne illness when swimming.

Water Quality Risks – Out of Season

From mid-May to mid-September, bathing water is monitored for the presence of microbial pathogens.

Some authorities monitor water quality year-round, for the presence of microbial pathogens. Most do it in the summer bathing season only.

Increased Rainfall



From autumn to spring water quality tends to be less favourable. Heavy rainfall and water-logged soil contributes to greater runoff of faecal pollution from farm land and from misconnections, leaks, and/or spills from urban wastewater collection systems.

Sources of pollution



Safety Tips



Don't swim within 48 hours of heavy rain.



Don't swim alone.



Swim parallel to shore / bank



Wear a wet suit



Don't drink alcohol before a swim



Bring a hot drink



Tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back



Don't dive in.



Wear a bright bathing cap



Don't swim beyond your safe limits



Bring a warm wrap

For more information on bathing waters and water quality monitoring data for your area:



For more on Water Safety:

