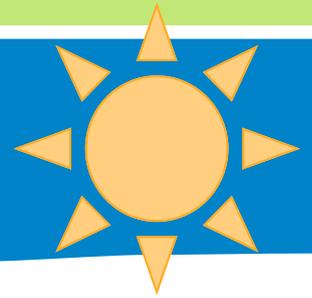


# Conservation

# beaches.ie



We are lucky to have some beautiful beaches in Ireland. Did you know that the water quality for many beaches around the country is tested during the summer months? If you want to check out a beach near you, or one you might visit during your holidays, visit [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie) to check



out the water quality and other information for over 200 beaches. The website also provides information on other aspects of water quality, beach safety and ways to “love your beach”.



The beautiful Barleycove Beach in West Cork.

## Who samples the beaches?

The local authorities – the county and city councils around the country – manage the sampling and analysis of the water at the beaches, often getting help from other organisations with this.



Samples are generally taken just below the surface in waters which are at least 1 m deep, depending on tidal conditions. The safety of the people sampling the water is a priority—entering the surf zone where breaking waves are present can be risky.

For select beaches, the bathing waters are sampled every year from the end of

May until mid-September. The official bathing season runs from 1st June to 15th September. By law, beaches that are being monitored and managed are required to be sampled monthly, at a minimum, during the bathing season. However, many local authorities sample every two weeks, and some even weekly.

Information courtesy of [www.beaches.ie](http://www.beaches.ie)

## What is the water sampled for?

Water is sampled for two common bacteria *E. coli* and *Intestinal enterococci*, which are organisms that live in the gut of all warm blooded animals including humans,

livestock, dogs, birds and are present in a very large number in faeces (in other words poo!).

As soon as results are reported to the local authority, the results are made available on [beaches.ie](http://beaches.ie)—usually within 48 hours after being analysed.



## What restrictions might be put in place?

Every local authority is working towards improving water quality at their beaches. Unfortunately, pollution incidents sometimes happen.

For example, bathing was prohibited on one beach for about three days after water quality deteriorated due to suspected agricultural activities/runoff.

On occasion, people were advised against bathing at particular beaches for the entire bathing season as the beaches may have been classified as having had poor water quality from the previous season.

Thankfully there are many beaches with excellent water quality!

