

# Sewage spills



## A sewage spill has occurred in your local waterway

Our top priorities are the public's health and safety and protecting our environment.

### What does this mean for me?

Sewage water contains pathogens (bacteria, viruses and parasites) which can cause harm to humans.

Pathogens in sewage can enter the body via:

- nose
- mouth
- ear canals
- open wounds
- inhalation of aerosols or dusts.

The most common way that pathogens enter the body is by drinking contaminated water or hand to mouth transmission.

### Can I go into the water?

When a sewage spill occurs:

- appropriate signage and/or barrier fencing will be erected advising the public not to enter the affected water.
- advice will be provided to the public via various media outlets and potentially via personnel at the site.

People with open wounds or infections should avoid primary contact activities in waterways at any time regardless of whether there has been a sewage spill. Primary contact activities are those where your face or whole body are immersed in water. Primary contact activities include swimming and surfing and these **should not be undertaken**.

Secondary contact activities are those where there may be some contact with water, but there is a low chance of water entering the nose, mouth or ear canals. Secondary contact

activities include wading, fishing or kayaking and **should be avoided** wherever possible.

Water quality tests will be conducted regularly along the impacted waterway by a National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) laboratory. Updated advice based on water quality results will be provided via the City's website, through media alerts and social media.

### Who is most at risk?

People with lower immune systems including the elderly, children under five, those with chronic illnesses or open cuts or wounds, are most at risk of contracting illnesses from polluted waterways.

### What should I do if I come into contact with a potentially polluted waterway?

It is important to wash any parts of your body that have come into contact with potentially polluted water with soap and clean water.

### What if I become sick after contact with a polluted waterway?

If you experience vomiting, diarrhoea, inflamed cuts, ear infections or stomach-ache after contact with a potentially polluted waterway, contact your doctor. Medical advice is also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by phoning Queensland Health on 13 HEALTH (13 432 584).

### For more information

**P** 1300 GOLDCOAST (1300 465 326)  
**E** [mail@cityofgoldcoast.com.au](mailto:mail@cityofgoldcoast.com.au)  
**W** [cityofgoldcoast.com.au](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au)