

## Swim Healthy: Reducing the risk of getting ill in open water

Open water swimming can increase the risk of gastrointestinal illnesses, or stomach bugs, which may cause diarrhoea and/or vomiting, as well as respiratory, skin, ear and eye infections.

There are a number of things you can do to reduce the risk of illness when swimming in open waters.

### **Before you swim**

- avoid swimming in water with blue-green algal blooms or scums in freshwaters
- cover cuts, scratches or sores with a waterproof plaster before swimming
- wear appropriate protective clothing such as a wetsuit, gloves or protective footwear

### **While you are swimming**

- try to avoid swallowing or splashing water into your mouth
- observe local safety advice

### **After swimming**

- clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially before eating or handling food
- thoroughly clean cuts or abrasions using soap and water
- Rinse wet clothing with clean water as soon as is practicable after swimming

## What to do if you become unwell

If you do become unwell with diarrhoea or any other symptoms, seek medical help and let them know you have been open water swimming. Do not swim again until you have had no diarrhoeal symptoms for at least 48 hours, or for a longer period if advised by a doctor.

## Where to get more information

- ❖ Visit the UK Health Security Agency Swim Healthy Guidance Page  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/swim-healthy-leaflet/swim-healthy>
- ❖ Check the quality of beach and bathing water in England (where available) at  
<https://www.gov.uk/quality-of-local-bathing-water>

Contact North Yorkshire Council on **0300 131 2 131**  
or visit <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/your-council/get-touch/contact-us>