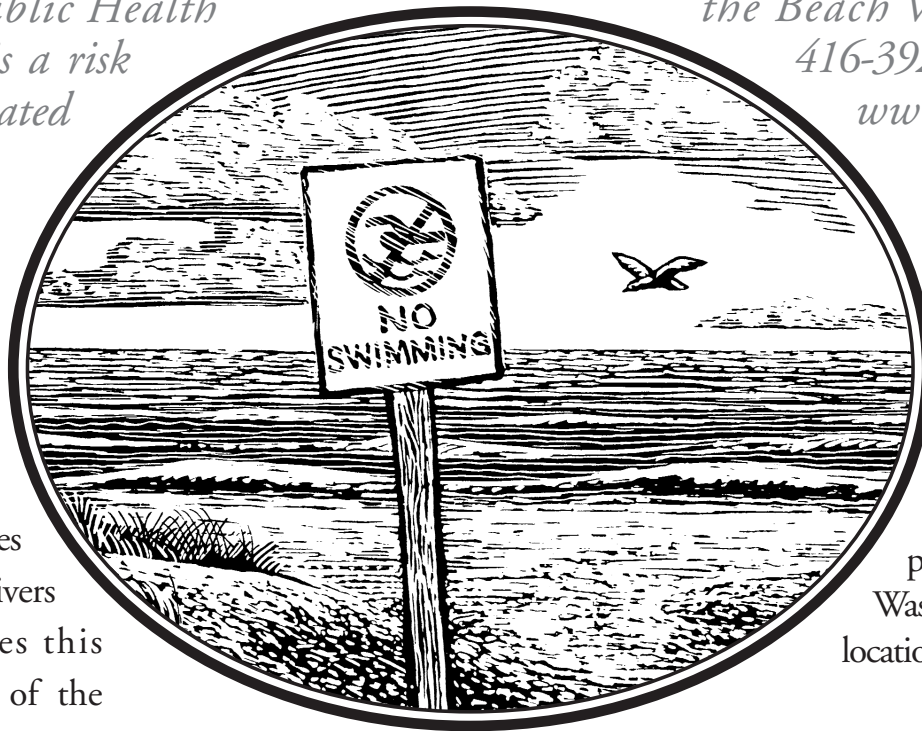




AS THE DAYS GET WARMER, our thoughts turn to summer and sunny days at one of our many beaches. Unfortunately, the sign we see posted all too often announces that it is not safe for swimming. The signs are posted by Toronto Public Health to warn that swimming is a risk to your health due to elevated

E. coli bacteria levels. These signs go up when the *E. coli* levels exceed 100 counts per 100 milliliters. We're vigilant with our testing program and, when compared to other cities, Toronto's standards are among the highest. To find out where it is safe to swim, call the Beach Water Quality Hotline at 416-392-7161 or visit our web site at www.city.toronto.on.ca/health



So, how do our beaches get polluted? *E. coli* bacteria at local beaches is caused by stormwater and combined sewer overflows, when wastewater from our homes is released, untreated, into our rivers and Lake Ontario. Why does this happen? In many older areas of the city, the main sewer system that carries sanitary waste from our homes also carries rainwater that washes off streets and roofs. Under normal conditions, all of the wastewater is treated before being discharged. But during heavy rainfall or snowmelt, this combined sewer system becomes overloaded and releases the wastewater untreated.

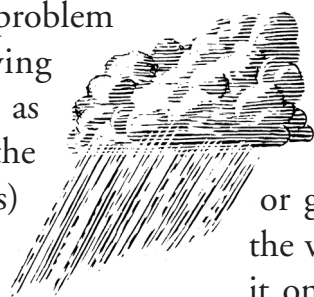
eliminate pesticide use on your lawn and garden. And of course, don't pour paints, oil or other toxic chemicals down any sewer. Drop off harmful products at Household Hazardous Waste Depots. Call 416-392-4330 for locations and times.

WHAT IS THE CITY DOING TO REDUCE STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Two underground detention tanks at Toronto's Eastern Beaches currently capture and hold combined sewer overflows and stormwater. The tanks have improved water quality and reduced the number of days the Eastern Beaches are posted unsafe for swimming. And the opening of the

In addition to
 "Please walk on the grass,"
 we want to make
 signs that read
 "Please swim in the lake."

The other part of the problem involves stormwater flowing across hard surfaces such as driveways and roads, into the roadside drains (sewer grates) and into the City's sewer systems. As stormwater flows, it picks up bacteria from pet waste and bird droppings, plus other pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, road salt, litter and chemical wash-off from industrial and commercial sites. These pollutants also degrade the water quality of our rivers and lake.



disconnected from the sewer. Register by calling 416-392-1807. You can also redirect your eavestroughs to a backyard pond or grassed area. Or better yet, collect the water in a rain barrel and then use it on your lawn and garden. You may be surprised to read that the amount of annual rainwater on an average home's rooftop is equal to flushing a 6-litre toilet 33 times a day, every day of the year. That's a lot of water that you can help keep out of the system.

Western Beaches storage tunnel should go a long way to cleaning up pollution of near-shore waters in this area.



We've also created stormwater management ponds and wetlands, with plans for more in the future.

We recognize this is an important issue. We're working diligently to find feasible short and long term solutions. Through a process called the Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan, we will determine the best way to manage stormwater pollution. The plan is being developed in partnership with non-profit agencies and the public. And we encourage you to get involved. Call the Waste and Water Education Line at 416-392-4546 or visit our web site.

Replace paved surfaces such as asphalt or concrete driveways and patios around your home with more porous materials that allow water to naturally seep into the ground. Consider using gravel, well-spaced interlocking bricks or grass. You can also reduce or



What can you do to help?

First, you can help reduce the amount of rainwater that gets into the sewers, thereby reducing the amount of overflow. Have your eavestrough downspout

