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UPDATE: 170 sickened by Lake Wazee, norovirus suspected

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By Lindsey Rykal, Multimedia Journalist/Daybreak Line Producer - [email](#)

Jackson County (Press Release) - The Jackson County Health Department in collaboration with Jackson County Forestry and Parks began an investigation Monday, July 9, after receiving notification of several persons who became ill after swimming in Lake Wazee Beach area on July 4th. Initially food poisoning was suspected, however, after investigation, the water in the beach area is thought to be a potential source for illness.



Jackson County Health Officer Christine Hovell has stated at this time there have been over 170 persons confirmed ill with vomiting, diarrhea, headache, nausea, stomachache fever and body aches. Illness does seem to be resolving itself in most persons after about 24-36 hours.

Testing of lake water by USDA officials has not proven any conclusive organism, however markers for fecal contaminants were found to be present in the beach water. Ecoli and blue green algae appear not to be factors in causing the illness. Norovirus is being suspected due to onset and symptoms of ill individuals. Samples from several ill persons have been sent to the WI State Lab of Hygiene for testing and results are pending.

Jackson County Forestry and Parks Administrator, Jim Zahasky states that Lake Wazee Beach will remain closed through this weekend. Christine Hovell, Jackson County Health Officer states that according to experts at USDA this will allow natural elements such as warm weather and UV lighting from the sun to destroy human contaminants in the water. The water at the beach will be retested on Monday July 16, to assure that it is safe for swimming and will reopen if testing determines it is safe to do so.

For persons who are interested in scuba diving or fishing in the larger area of the lake, the Health Department is requesting persons wash their hands after being in the lake and that all scuba equipment be cleaned thoroughly.

The Health Department would also like to remind persons who are performing any recreational activity in a lake, river or stream to wash their hands prior to eating.

For further questions please contact the Health Department at 715-284-4301 ext. 372.

Black River Falls (WQOW)-An area health department is trying to figure out why people are getting sick after swimming in a Jackson County lake.

More than 45 people have reported a flu like-illness after swimming in Lake Wazee in Black River Falls over the July 4th holiday.

So far, the Jackson County Health Department has ruled out e-coli and also says blue - green alga is not the source of the contamination.



"One of the things that we're looking for are some human contaminants that would have been brought into the lake from somebody that might have been ill. One of those things is norovirus which is a common stomach illness," said Christine Hovell, Jackson County public health manager.

Warnings have been posted at the beach and people are being asked not to swim until further notice.

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