

Swimmer's itch at Crown Beach

After a two year absence of confirmed human cases, swimmer's itch, also called cercarial dermatitis has returned to Robert Crown Beach in Alameda. The first two confirmed cases were reported soon after the annual sandcastle building contest on Crown Beach during the Memorial Day weekend. Increased water temperatures appear to trigger the bubble snail—the reservoir host to release the parasitic worms into the water. This is a newly reported invasive species first detected in 2003 in Alameda County. [Emerging Infectious Diseases: "Cercarial Dermatitis Transmitted by Exotic Marine Snail" Brant et al., 2010](#)

Swimmer's itch usually affects only exposed skin — skin not covered by swimsuits, wet suits or waders. The rash may appear up to 48 hours after swimming (or wading) in infested water, but you may also experience itching without ever developing a rash. But humans aren't suitable hosts for them, so the parasites soon die while still in your skin. Although uncomfortable, swimmer's itch is usually short-lived. The rash of swimmer's itch, typically clears up on its own within a few days. In the meantime, you can control itching with over-the-counter or prescription medications.

Swimmers can protect themselves by limiting exposure to the water, rinsing and towel dry thoroughly after being in the water. There are no long-term health effects from this condition.

Swimmer's itch warning signs are posted at designated locations along Crown Beach. If you think you have been exposed to swimmer's itch, please notify the East Bay Regional Parks (510) 544-3170 or the Beach water monitoring hotline (510) 567-6706.

<http://www.acvcSD.org/services/vectorborne/swimmers-itch.htm>