



Pathogens and Our Waterways

What are pathogens?

Bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms that can cause diseases. Examples include giardia, salmonella, and Escheria coli (E. coli).

How do pathogens get into our Waterways?

Generally, pathogens occur in waterways that have been contaminated by fecal matter from wildlife, livestock, pets, and/or humans. During storm events, this waste can drain off of lawns, streets, and agricultural areas and discharge into our streams. It can also discharge into waterways through improper sewer connections or septic systems.



Why do we care?

Untreated drinking water, and water where swimming, fishing, and other recreational activities occur may be contaminated with pathogens that can make us sick.

We can be exposed to these pathogens through ingestion, inhalation, or direct contact with the contaminated water.



Pathogens impairments within the Township's Waterways

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has identified the Conestoga River, Groff Creek, and the Cocalico Creek as "impaired" as a result of the pathogens levels in the waterways. West Earl Township is working to identify potential sources of pathogens discharges to the waterways. The Township is also working to address potential problems to improve the health of our waterways.

How can the community help?

- Pick up after your pets
- Minimize the amount of fertilizer on your lawn
- Complete routine septic system inspections
- In agricultural areas, implement structural and agronomic BMPs. Visit the Lancaster County Conservation District's Agricultural BMP webpage for more information: lanasterconservation.org/agriculture/best-management-practices



Contact West Earl Township to report a concern or if you have questions regarding pathogens and our waterways (717-859-3201).