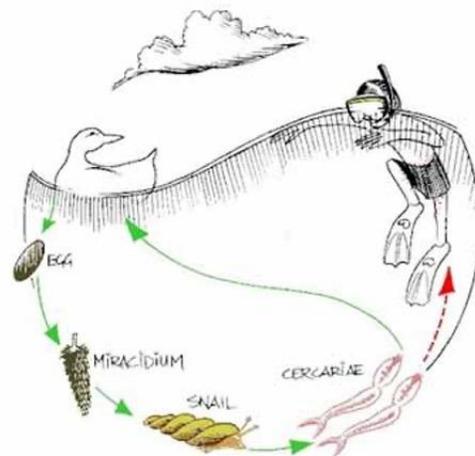




Did You Know? Swimmer's Itch is Widespread in Wisconsin

Summer “up north” means campfires, fishing and boat rides, but it can also involve a few annoyances—like mosquitos, ticks and swimmer’s itch.

Swimmers’ itch (*Schistosoma dermatitis*) is a temporary skin irritation caused by the tiny larvae of the trematode worm. According to the Wisconsin DNR, swimmer’s itch normally occurs when water temperatures reach their near-maximum summer temperature. This usually occurs in late June or early July in northern Wisconsin.



Swimmer’s itch is widespread in Wisconsin and there seem to be no special characteristics of lakes where it’s present, according to the DNR. Some recreational waters in the state experience swimmer’s itch annually, yet other lakes may have an occasional outbreak or none at all. An outbreak may be severe, but last for only a few days, or minor and last much of the season.

Swimmer's Itch Life Cycle

- The adult trematode worms are parasites in the blood of aquatic birds and mammals. Ducks are the most common hosts, but other birds and mammals that spend their life in or around the water may also be hosts. The worms lay eggs in the host
- The eggs are deposited on the bottom of the lake through the host’s droppings.
- The eggs hatch and free-swimming animals called miracidia are released into the lake water.
- The miracidia penetrate snails and then develop into cercariae, tiny fork-tailed colorless larvae that are then released by the snails.
- The cercariae find a host (aquatic birds, mammals or humans). Cercariae penetrate the skin of bathers as water droplets dry. Small red dots appear at the site of penetration. Humans are not suitable hosts and the cercariae die after penetrating the skin, but the itching can be mild to severe and can

last several days.

Preventing Swimmer's Itch

The only sure way to prevent swimmer's itch is to stay out of the water when the cercariae are present, but the following measures can reduce the chances of getting it.

- Wear a tight-fitting, full-body rash guard. Larvae typically can't penetrate the fabric. Bonus: You can use less sunscreen!
- Apply a water repellent substance such as petroleum jelly, waterproof sunscreen or other skin oils to reduce the ability of the cercariae to penetrate your skin.
- Avoid lounging in surface waters. Larvae migrate to the surface and can accumulate in shallow water.
- Avoid onshore winds. Larvae are moved by wind and current and can be more prevalent near windward shores.
- Swim in deeper water if you can. Larvae are released from shallow-water snails, so fewer are present in deeper water.
- Towel off briskly after swimming. Larvae can cling to the skin when you exit the water but can be dislodged by vigorous rubbing.
- Avoid feeding ducks. The fewer ducks that congregate on your shore, the fewer eggs get deposited.

Treatment

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, most cases of swimmer's itch do not require medical attention. The CDC recommends trying the following if a rash develops:

- Use corticosteroid cream or another anti-itch cream or lotion.
- Apply cool compresses to the affected areas.
- Bathe in Epsom salts or baking soda.
- Soak in colloidal oatmeal baths.
- Apply baking soda paste to the rash (made by stirring water into baking soda until it reaches a paste-like consistency.)
- Try not to scratch, since this can lead to infection. For severe itching, your health care provider may suggest prescription-strength lotions or creams to lessen your symptoms.

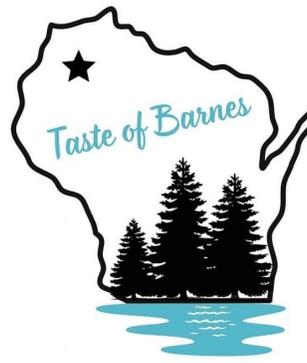
Swimmer's itch is no fun, especially for the youngest bathers whose sensitive skin may make them more vulnerable. Keep your summer adventures fun and memorable—without the scratchy souvenirs—by taking preventative measures to avoid swimmer's itch. And if it strikes despite your precautions, make sure you keep some anti-itch supplies on hand to lessen the impact of those annoying little larvae.

**Visit us at Taste of
Barnes!**

**We're celebrating this
Saturday, June 15, 10am - 3pm**

at [Taste of Barnes!](#)

Stop by our booth in the
Barnes Town Park and say
hello.



Helpful Links

In case you missed it, the [FOECLA Spring 2024 Newsletter](#) is available on our website.

[Join or Renew](#) your Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area membership for 2024.



Dark Skies Presentation

June 27, 2024

07:00 PM Central Time
(US and Canada)

Please join host Stephen Wilbers and Minnesota's [Starry Skies North](#) President, Todd Burlet, for a 15-minute Zoom presentation, followed by a 15-minute Q & A.

Todd is leading the charge to establish DarkSky Wisconsin. He will answer your questions about a host of topics, from purchasing recommended light fixtures to certifying your cabin or business as dark sky friendly and getting involved with DarkSky Wisconsin.

If you're interested in joining the meeting, please send Stephen Wilbers a note at wilbe004@umn.edu - or just zoom in!

Join Zoom Meeting (6/27 at 7pm Central Time)
[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84446623532?
pwd=DJn0yVb7K2W0X4Sz0lz9Z8vzbj7OTY.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84446623532?pwd=DJn0yVb7K2W0X4Sz0lz9Z8vzbj7OTY.1)

Meeting ID: 844 4662 3532
Passcode: 563184

You're Invited!

Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area 2024 Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 20 Barnes Town
Hall
9 am - 11:15 am

9:00 - 10:00 Business Meeting
10:00 - 10:15 Coffee Break
10:15 - 11:15 Wisconsin's Elk Herd



Wisconsin's Elk Herd

In this all ages presentation, DNR Wildlife Biologist Josh Spiegel will present the history, management, and current status of Wisconsin's Elk Herd. Elk once roamed Wisconsin and have since been reintroduced to the Wisconsin landscape in two locations.

A central Wisconsin native, Josh Spiegel, Sawyer County Wildlife Biologist with the Wisconsin DNR, received a Bachelor of Science Degree with an emphasis in Wildlife Ecology from Northland College. Josh has a passion and interest related to outdoor recreation, including interest in Wisconsin's wildlife management. He has worked with the DNR Elk Program since 2012.

Mission: To protect, preserve and improve the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the Eau Claire Lakes Area watershed, including the lakes, rivers, shore lands, wetlands, forests and attendant wildlife resources.

BAYFIELD AND DOUGLAS COUNTIES, WI

*Join us on Facebook where we share photos, stories, educational events and other opportunities to learn more about the the lakes, rivers, shore lands, wetlands and forests we treasure
Search for "Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area" or
click on the blue Facebook icon below.*

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