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## **Microbial Indicators of Marine Recreational Water Quality**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Recreational swimming is a popular activity, with more than 600 million visitor-days to the beach annually in California alone. However, coastal waters are susceptible to contamination from urban runoff or other discharges and can serve as a vehicle for transmission of microbial pathogens. As a result, considerable resources are expended each year to measure water quality at recreational beaches. The need for such monitoring in the United States was recently formalized in the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act, which requires coastal states to monitor beach water quality and warn the public when beach waters contain dangerously high levels of disease-causing microorganisms.

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