



### Statement on Rowing and Water Borne Diseases

There are other risks to health associated with water-based activities which arise from the micro biological or chemical quality of the water itself and of its immediate environs. The use of inland waters can never be risk free and it is essential that as users, we are aware of the risks present.

#### **Weill's Disease - Leptospirosis**

The risk of contracting Leptospirosis from recreational water is small, however the serious nature of the disease is such that we must be aware of the dangers and should take simple precautions to reduce the risk of infection, viz.,

- Cuts and abrasions (including blisters) should be covered with waterproof dressings.
- Wear footwear to avoid cuts and protect feet when paddling in the water (launching a boat).
- Shower after contact with the water.
- Wash hands thoroughly before eating and drinking.

If 'flu like symptoms develop shortly after contact with the water (1-3 weeks) then your doctor should be contacted and advised of the circumstances of exposure.

#### **Blue-Green Algae - Cynobacteria**

Cynobacteria are commonly found in fresh and brackish water during mid to late summer. In favourable, stable conditions, blooms may form. Algal scums accumulate downwind on the surface of lakes and slow moving water. Toxins produced by large blooms have caused the death of sheep and dogs and skin and other disorders in humans, although no particular illness has been identified that can be linked with Blue-Green Algae. By way of precaution:

- Avoid immersion or contact with water affected by algal scum.
- Minimise contact with water by wearing close fitting clothing.
- After any contact hose down all equipment to avoid contact with residual scum.
- All clothing should be washed and thoroughly dried on returning home.
- Shower after contact with the water.

#### **Gastro-intestinal illness**

There are currently no micro-biological standards for recreational water and at present only the powers provided under the Public Health Act 1936 - Section 259 to deal with "any pond, pool, ditch, gutter or water course which is so foul or in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance" provide us with protection.

Assessing the risks posed by water quality is difficult as conditions can vary substantially in a very short space of time. In general, the health risk will depend on the number and proximity of sewage effluent discharges in any particular body of water. The use of inland water will never be risk free and it is essential that users are aware of the risks involved in using a particular stretch of water.

By way of precaution after immersion or contact with water of uncertain quality -

- Do not eat or drink before showering/washing.
- If 'foul' water has been swallowed refer to your doctor with full details of incident.