

# Health Effects of Polluted Stormwater\*

## Recreation/ Swimming

- Fecal coliform, bacteria and parasites may lead to:
  - Viral infections
  - Earaches
  - Eye discharges
  - Sinus problems
  - Fever and flu
  - Skin rashes
  - Gastrointestinal problems

## Drinking Water

- Acute illnesses can result from consuming water contaminated with protozoan oocysts, viruses, and bacteria
- Nitrates increase risk of methemoglobinemia, causing shortness of breath and blueness of the skin, especially for **infants**
- Water with elevated nitrate is suspected to increase miscarriage risk

## Seafood Consumption

- Diarrheal and paralytic illnesses caused by the hepatitis A and Norwalk viruses, *Vibrio* species, and marine biotoxins formed by algal blooms
- Insecticides in fish raise concerns about carcinogenic effects and disruption of hormonal systems in humans

## Ground Debris

- Trash and animal waste
- Disease-spreading bacteria, putting children and their families at risk in their local communities

## Pooling of Stormwater

- Increased potential breeding areas for mosquitoes, the disease vectors for dengue hemorrhagic fever, West Nile virus, and other infectious diseases

\*Gaffield, S. J., Goo, R. L., Richards, L. A., & Jackson, R. J. (2003). Public Health Effects of Inadequately Managed Stormwater Runoff. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(9), 1527–1533.