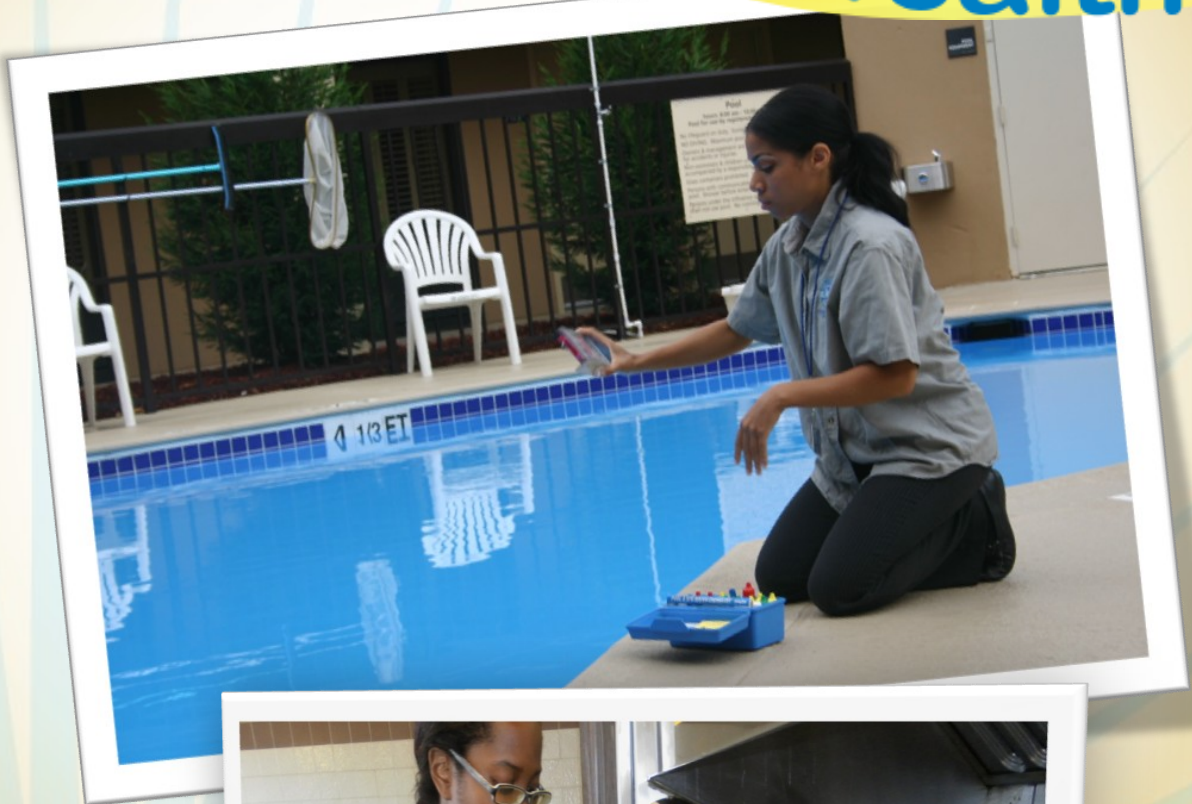


Environmental Health



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The environment plays an important role in human development and health. People born today have a life expectancy about twice that of people born a century ago. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences attributes most of these additional years to healthful environmental changes such as improved sanitation, purified water, cleaner air and the safer use of chemicals.

Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine said:

“If you want to learn about the health of the population, look at the air they breathe, the water they drink, and the places where they live.”



CDPH’s Center for Environmental Health administers the following environmental health services in the county:

- Plan review, permitting, inspection and complaint investigation of:
 - Food service establishments
 - Public swimming pools
 - Tourist accommodations
 - Mobile home parks
 - On-site sewage management systems and pumper operations
- Investigation of foodborne, waterborne and vectorborne diseases
- Food safety training and certification
- Investigation of general nuisance complaints concerning sewage, insects, rodents, solid wastes, and other environmental issues
- On-site sewage contractor testing and certification
- Inspection and testing of individual water wells
- West Nile virus surveillance, technical assistance and complaint investigation
- Radon education and testing
- Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

AIR QUALITY

Federal and state standards are set for air quality. These standards define levels of quality that are necessary, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect the public from known or anticipated harmful effects of pollutants. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) monitors air quality year-round on pollutants with the exception of ozone, which is measured March through November. The Air Quality Index (AQI) converts the measured pollutant concentration in a community's air to a number on a scale of 0 to 500. A pollutant reading is in the unsatisfactory range if it exceeds 100. Cobb County AQI is part of the Metropolitan Atlanta AQI. You may access air quality on any given day at www.georgiaepd.org.



In 2009, Metropolitan Atlanta (which includes Cobb County) overall air quality measured in the unhealthy range 16 out of 340 days measured.

OZONE

The air quality standard for ozone, which is designed to protect public health with an adequate margin of safety, is established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2008, EPA revised the 8-hour average ozone standard to lower the thresholds for ozone levels reported as 'unhealthy'. The air quality standard for ozone is 0.075 parts per million (ppm) averaged over eight hours. According to the EPA, ground-level ozone, a primary component of smog, is one of the major air pollution problems in the United States. Ozone is measured March through November at 24 sites across Georgia, one of which is in Kennesaw. In 2009, there were 14 days in metropolitan Atlanta where the ozone level exceeded standards set by the EPA. You may access ozone levels on any given day by going to www.georgiaepd.org.

WATER QUALITY

Cobb County receives its drinking water from the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, a regional wholesale provider. Cobb's drinking water originates entirely in Georgia and is delivered to residents by the Cobb County Water System. The System is an award winning provider that has been nationally and locally recognized for excellence in water systems.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. Contaminants that may be present include microbial, inorganic, pesticides, herbicides, organic and radioactive.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's **Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791**.

People more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking include:

- Immuno-compromised persons, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders
- Some elderly people
- Infants

Each year the Cobb County Water System publishes an annual water quality report. You may access the current and past reports by going to www.cobbwater.org.

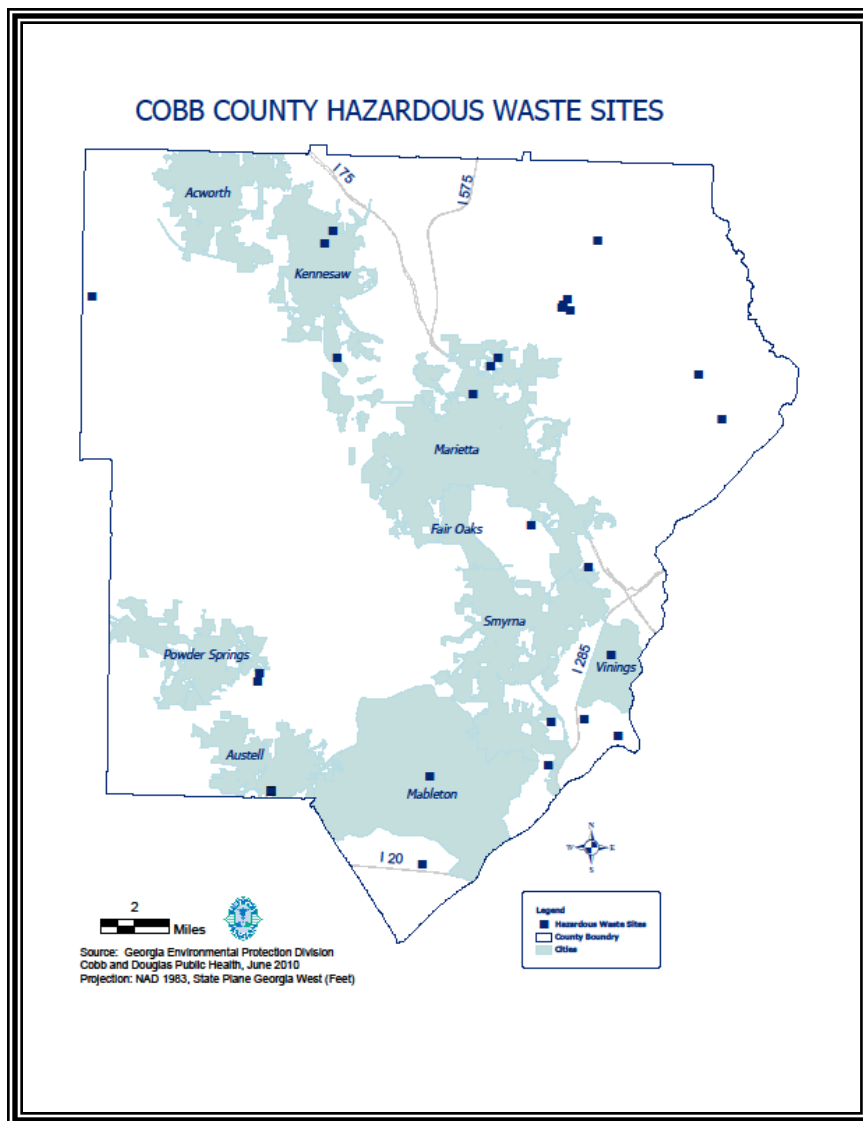


The Cobb County Water System reported that in 2009 drinking water met or exceeded all safety and quality standards set by the State of Georgia and the EPA.

HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

The Hazardous Site Inventory (HSI) is a list of sites in Georgia where there have been a known or suspected release of a regulated substance above a reportable quantity and which have yet to show they meet state clean-up standards found in the Rules for Hazardous Site Response. The HSI is compiled and published by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) annually. The July 1, 2008 edition listed 575 sites, and the July 1, 2009 edition added 9 sites and removed 11 for a total of 573 sites for Georgia.

In 2009, 27 sites were identified in Cobb County. The following map shows the location of these sites.



Additional information regarding the Hazardous Sites Response Program, the rules for Hazardous Site Response, or an electronic version of the HSI can be found on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division web site at www.gaepd.org. If you would like more information about a site listed on the map, please contact the Hazardous Sites Response Program at 404-657-8600.

RABIES

Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The [rabies virus](#) infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. Death usually occurs within days of the onset of symptoms.

Table 10-1 provided by the CDC shows the likelihood of occurrence of rabies in different animals.

Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Raccoons	Dogs*	Rabbits
Foxes	Cats*	Rodents
Bats		Hares
Skunks		Livestock

* Unvaccinated Source: CDC

Table 10-2 shows that even though the greatest number of rabies tests are done on dogs and cats, raccoons are the most likely to test positive in Cobb County. In fact, half of the raccoons tested in 2009 were positive. People are often exposed to rabid raccoons because they try to feed and handle them. Raccoons are wild animals that should never be domesticated.

Animal	How many were tested	Tested Positive
Cat	58	1
Dog	77	0
Bat	14	1
Fox	2	1
Raccoon	22	10
Chipmunk	1	0
Squirrel	1	0
Hamster	1	0



From 2003-2009 there was an average of 12 rabid animals per year identified in Cobb County.

Source: Georgia Division of Public Health. (2010). Notifiable Disease Query

WHY IS RABIES IMPORTANT?

Rabies is caused by a virus that infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death in mammals (animals and humans). The virus is most often transmitted by the bite or scratch of an infected animal. It is one of the most deadly viruses known causing death in almost 100% of mammals.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

1. Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all cats, ferrets and dogs.
 2. Maintain control of your pet by keeping them under direct supervision.
 3. Spay or neuter your pets to prevent roaming and contact with rabid mammals.
 4. Do not feed or try to domesticate wild animals like raccoons.
 5. Do not touch stray animals; call Cobb County Animal Control to remove all stray animals from your neighborhood. Contact information for Animal Control is www.animalcontrol.cobbcountyga.gov or 770-499-4136.
1. If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:
 - Wash the wound
 - Seek medical treatment if needed
 - Report the incident to Cobb County Animal Control

HOW DO WE COMPARE?

- Rabies occurs in every state of the United States except Hawaii.
- More than 90% of all rabies animal cases reported annually now occur in wildlife.
- Most of the rabies cases occur in raccoons, although rabid bats are becoming prevalent.
- Georgia averages around 336 animal rabies cases per year.
- Cobb County averages 12 animal rabies cases per year.
- 27 cases of human rabies have been reported in people in the United States since 1970.
- A human case of rabies was last reported in Georgia in 2000.

TO LEARN MORE...

For more information, log onto the following websites.

www.cdc.gov/rabies

www.health.state.ga.us



VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

Diseases that are carried by arthropods such as mosquitoes and ticks are called vector-borne diseases.

West Nile virus (WNV) is a potentially serious vector-borne illness that appeared in the eastern United States in 1999. Most often, WNV is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes can then spread WNV to humans and other animals when they bite.



Did you know...

The Cobb & Douglas Public Health (CDPH) Epidemiology Team interviews reported human cases of WNV. These interviews provide valuable epidemiological data as well as education to infected residents. The CDPH Environmental Health staff work in conjunction with the Cobb County Water Authority to place larvicide in standing water throughout the county and investigate mosquito complaints. Larvicide kills mosquito larvae before they become biting adults. Residents may call the CDPH Environmental Health Program to report mosquito complaints at 770-435-7815.

Important facts about WNV include:

- **1 in 150 people infected with the virus develop severe illness, which can include paralysis.**
- **4 out of 5 people who are infected with the virus never show any symptoms and do not seek medical care.**
- **10 human WNV cases were confirmed in Cobb County from 2005-2009.**

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT WNV?

The best way to avoid WNV is to prevent mosquito bites.

- Use insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (or PMD), or IR3535. Pregnant women should contact their healthcare provider before using repellent.
- Avoid outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels.
- Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly.
- Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out.
- Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when not in use.