

What you need to know to swim safely

Many people will be enjoying the beautiful Gironde coastline this summer. However there are some dangers you should be aware of before you hit the beach.

Due to strong currents (know as *baïnes*) and unusually strong waves, swimming can sometimes be a hazardous activity.

THIS LEAFLET PROVIDES USEFUL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON ENJOYING THE BEACH SAFELY. SO BEFORE YOU TAKE A DIP, TAKE THE TIME TO READ OUR ADVICE.

Swimming can sometimes be a dangerous activity mostly because of **baïnes** or **strong shore waves**.

Conditions can change quickly so check weather reports regularly and look out for warning flags on the beach.



112 - 18 - 15 Emergency numbers

112 is the European emergency call number, which can be dialled free of charge from any mobile or home number, anywhere throughout the European Union.

112 puts you directly in contact with the emergency department concerned (local police, fire or medical services) and allows you to speak to an operator in various European languages.

112 is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week




Plaquette rédigée en collaboration avec le SAMU 33 chargé de la régulation des plages





A map of the coastline Lifeguard posts is available on:


plages-nsl.com

Check that your beach is under surveillance or being monitored.

 La plaquette est consultable sur le site des services de l'État

 You can refer to the leaflet on the Prefecture website

 Se puede consultar el folleto en el sitio web de la Prefectura

 Das Faltblatt kann auf der Internetseite der Präfektur eingesehen werden
www.gironde.gouv.fr

Préfecture de la Gironde
2, esplanade Charles-de-Gaulle – CS41397
33077 BORDEAUX cedex
pref-courrier@gironde.gouv.fr

British Consulate
gov.uk/government/world/france

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BEACH SAFETY ADVICE

...Be sure
on the shore ...

Swimming
safely
along the
Girondine
coastline



PRÉFET DE LA ZONE
DE DÉFENSE
ET DE SÉCURITÉ
SUD-OUEST



British Consulate
Bordeaux

What is a *baïne*?

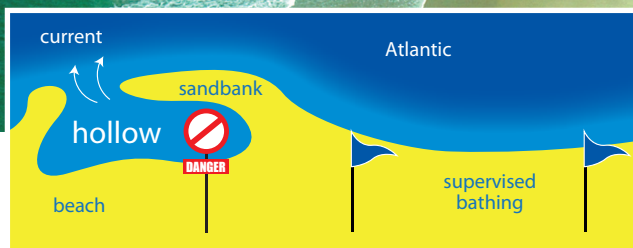
A **baïne** is a formation of water created by the movement of the tides. In the local dialect, it means "basin, bowl of water". They can be found all along the Atlantic coast.

A *baïne* appears at low tide. You can see these "basins" of fine sand on the shore at low tide. Swimmers are attracted to these "basins" as the water appears calmer than elsewhere.

But at low tide, when the sea level drops, the water flows out of these basins very suddenly, creating a strong current known as a **baïne current** that pulls swimmers towards the open sea. Once caught in the current, it can be very difficult to get out and there is a high risk of drowning.

This phenomenon occurs at a precise moment with each tide, depending on the swell or the tidal range. The higher the waves or the tidal range, the more dangerous the *baïnes*.

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What to do

if you are caught in a *baïne*

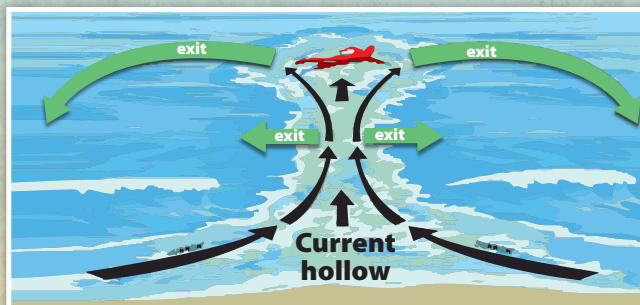
Be well prepared ...

- *Baïnes* are at their most dangerous during the first three hours of the incoming tide and the last three hours of the outgoing tide;
- The best way to avoid difficulty is to be aware of where the *baïnes* are during the tidal wave. You can then avoid them altogether;

To find this out, you can check the information boards at the entrance to the First Aid Posts.

If you are caught in a *baïne* ...

- Try not to panic;
- Above all, don't fight against the current. Let it carry you away even if that means drifting for a while;
- Draw attention to yourself whilst drifting, by waving your arms. Wait for help;
- Wait for a lull in the current and then try to swim out of the danger area (see diagram).



Strong Currents (as a general rule):

- Do not try to swim back to your starting point;
- Even if you are carried 300m further out you will be safe.

Please make sure you find out about the tidal currents

How to stay

safe in the waves

Waves can be great fun but the big ones can be powerful enough to injure if precautions are not taken.

© photo Laurent Mignaux - MEDDTL

Advice

to avoid accidents

On arrival at your destination, find out about the bathing areas and check if they are supervised, dangerous or even forbidden.

WARNING FLAGS		
Supervised bathing, no particular danger	Supervised bathing, but possibly dangerous	No bathing allowed

- ▶ Always cross the wave by diving through it;
- ▶ Stand sideways when the wave breaks or is at its peak;
- ▶ Be careful of a series of waves which can draw you downwards;
- ▶ Finally, to stay safe, only swim in the supervised areas where there are trained swimming instructors.

