

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week

(Las Vegas, Nev., - May 19, 2005) – The week preceding Memorial Day (May 23-30, 2005) has, for the first time, been designated as National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week.

The goal of this year's recognition is to highlight the importance of healthy swimming, healthy swimming behaviors and recreational water illness prevention. In Clark County the health district inspects the more than 4,300 swimming pools and spas located at public parks, apartment complexes, hotels, RV parks, homeowner's associations and sports complexes on an annual basis to ensure cleanliness, availability of safety equipment, approved test kits, water quality and appropriate signs and lifeguards are present. Annually, the health district conducts more than 7,100 inspections and pools are closed if there is a safety concern or a chemical imbalance of the pool water.

Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs) are spread by swimming in water contaminated as a result of poorly maintained recreational water venues, the presence of chlorine resistant germs, or runoff-related contamination of lakes or marine beaches. The public's awareness of RWIs and appropriate behaviors plays a pivotal role in RWI transmission. High-risk groups such as the young, the elderly, pregnant women and the immunosuppressed should also be advised about RWI prevention and healthy swimming behaviors. Healthy swimming behaviors include:

1. Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
2. Don't swallow pool water – avoid getting water in your mouth.
3. Practice good hygiene. Shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
4. Take children on bathroom breaks or change diapers often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean it's too late.
5. Change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pools.
6. Wash your child thoroughly with soap and water before swimming, invisible amounts of fecal matter on their bottoms will end up in the pool.

Recreational water venues provide opportunities for people to increase their level of physical activity and enjoy their leisure time. To optimize your summer fun and enjoy a healthy swimming experience, the Clark County Health District and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge swimmers to adopt healthy swimming behaviors that will protect oneself, one's family and fellow swimmers from the spread of illness.