



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### Health District offers safety tips for summer

**LAS VEGAS** – They're here . . . triple-digit temperatures. The Southern Nevada Health District offers tips to stay safe and healthy during the long, hot summer. The health district reminds parents about the ABCDs of drowning prevention, tips to prevent mosquito breeding and bites, and information about swimming safely to prevent illness. Additional information and video is available on the health district website, [www.SNHD.info](http://www.SNHD.info).

#### **ABCDs of Drowning Prevention:**

Since January, there have been 16 submersion incidents in our community among children under the age of 14, three of which were drowning deaths. Children should be well-supervised when they have access to any water source, including bathtubs. The health district and its community partners have begun an annual campaign to remind parents of the ABCDs of drowning prevention:

- A Adult supervision**, it is recommended that a parent is within arm's length when children are in a pool, bathtub or other water sources
- B Barriers to the pool**, such as fences or gate alarms
- C Classes**, such as swimming and CPR courses
- D Devices** such as personal flotation devices, life jackets and rescue tools

Drowning is a silent killer and a majority of deaths occur in a pool or spa; however, any amount of water can pose a hazard, including a bathtub. In just 10 seconds, or the time it takes to grab a towel, a small child can become submerged and in the two minutes it can take to answer the telephone, a child can lose consciousness. Twenty percent of near-drowning accidents that require hospitalization result in severe and permanent disability. A majority of these accidents occur between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. when one or both parents are at home to supervise their children. Oftentimes, the victim was last seen in the house or away from the pool area.

In addition to supervision, experts recommend "layers of protection." A non-climbable five-foot fence that separates a pool or spa from the residence should be installed and openings should not be more than four inches wide so children cannot squeeze through the spaces. Gates should be self-latching and never left unlocked.

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## Summer Safety – add one

### **West Nile virus**

The health district advises everyone to be vigilant and conscientious about mosquito breeding sources, which can be as little as a cup of water. Stagnant water sources are the optimal breeding source for mosquitoes. The following recommendations can help minimize exposure to mosquito breeding sources and bites:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Follow package directions.
- Wear pants and long-sleeved shirts when outdoors and spray repellent on clothes and exposed areas of skin. Light colored clothing can help you see mosquitoes that land on you.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, notably at dawn and dusk (the first two hours after sunset).
- Eliminate areas of standing water, including bird baths and unmaintained swimming pools.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Aerate (fountain, bubbler, etc.) ornamental pools or stock them with mosquito-eating fish.
- Change the water in pet dishes twice a week.
- Drill drainage holes in tire swings, recycling containers, etc., so water drains out.
- Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they are not being used.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens without tears or holes.
- Make sure gutters drain properly and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Use landscaping to eliminate stagnant water that collects on your property; clean up leaf litter and similar organic debris.
- If you are outdoors in a mosquito infested area, place mosquito netting over infant carriers.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure.

West Nile virus made its first appearance in the United States in the late 1990s and made its way to Nevada in 2003. West Nile virus is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which acquire the virus by feeding on infected birds. The illness is not spread person to person or by casual contact.

### **Recreational Water Illnesses**

Recreational water illnesses are spread by swallowing, breathing in or having contact with contaminated water from swimming pools, spas, lakes, rivers or oceans. They can cause a variety of symptoms including skin or eye infections, respiratory infections or even wound infections. The most common illness is diarrhea.

Swimmers who are ill with diarrhea can easily contaminate large pools or water parks. In addition, lakes, rivers, and the ocean can be contaminated by sewage spills, animal waste and water runoff following rainfall. Some common germs can also live for long periods of time in salt water.

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## Summer Safety – add two

Pool inspections play an important role in maintaining appropriate levels of disinfectant and pH to keep pools clean and safe, however, swimmers are also encouraged to follow guidelines to keep germs from spreading and to enjoy the many health benefits swimming offers:

- Do not swallow pool water.
- Do not swim if you are ill with diarrhea.
- Shower with soap before swimming, wash hands after using the restroom or changing diapers.
- Take children on regular bathroom breaks and/or check diapers often
- Change diapers in a restroom or diaper-changing area, not at poolside.
- Wash children thoroughly (especially their buttocks) with soap and water before they go swimming.

Additional information about recreational water illnesses and prevention is available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Healthy Swimming website at [www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming), the Environmental Protection Agency’s beaches website [www.epa.gov/beaches](http://www.epa.gov/beaches).

### Heat Safety

Southern Nevada’s high summer temperatures can be harmful to older people, children, or those with a chronic medical condition. The health district reminds Valley residents and visitors to use precaution:

- Plan activities for either before noon or in the evening.
- Dress in loose fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect the face and use sunscreen.
- If unaccustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and gradually increase the pace.
- Avoid being out in the sun for extended periods of time.
- When planning extended outdoor activity, bring an adequate supply of water. Drink plenty of water at regular intervals - regardless of activity level.
- Limit alcoholic beverages, they can cause dehydration.
- Plan well-balanced light meals.
- Check on the status of homebound neighbors and relatives.

**Caution:** Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney or liver disease; are on fluid-restrictive or low-salt diets; or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake or changing what they eat and drink.

Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict](http://www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict), on YouTube [www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict](http://www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict) or Twitter : [www.twitter.com/SNHDinfo](http://www.twitter.com/SNHDinfo).