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Enjoy the Water and Stay Healthy

2010 National Recreational Water Illness (RWI) Prevention Week

The week before Memorial Day (May 24–30, 2010) is National Recreational Water Illness (RWI) Prevention Week. The goal of this observance is to raise awareness about healthy swimming behaviors, including ways to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs). RWIs are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, hot tubs, interactive fountains, water play areas, lakes, rivers, or oceans.

RWI Prevention Week 2010 Themes: Pool Inspections and the Triple A's of Healthy Swimming

The themes of RWI Prevention Week 2010 are pool inspections and the Triple A's of Healthy Swimming. Pool inspection data can help pool programs identify common health code violations and determine priorities for keeping their facilities healthy. Having the right disinfectant and pH levels in recreational water is essential to stopping the spread of germs that cause RWIs. Although pool inspectors check to make sure these levels are right, they can't be at every pool every day. To help ensure a healthy swimming experience every time, we are encouraging swimmers to follow the Triple A's of Healthy Swimming: Awareness, Action, and Advocacy.

- Awareness
 - Visit CDC's Healthy Swimming website at www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming
 - Learn how to protect yourself and others from RWIs and follow the Six Steps for Healthy Swimming (listed below)

- Action
 - Check pool water yourself using test strips purchased at your local hardware or pool supply store
 - Ask the pool operator about chlorine and pH levels and request information on the latest pool inspection score
- Advocacy
 - Encourage pool operators to take steps shown to kill the germs that cause RWIs
 - Educate other swimmers about RWIs to promote healthy swimming

Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs)

The best way to prevent RWIs is to keep germs out of the pool in the first place. Follow these six steps for a safe and healthy swimming experience:

Three Steps for all Swimmers

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- Don't swallow pool water.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.

Three Steps for Parents of Young Children

- Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside.
- Wash your children thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before they go swimming.

For more information about healthy swimming, visit:

- CDC's Healthy Swimming website at www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming
- The Environmental Protection Agency's beaches website www.epa.gov/beaches

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