

May 21, 2018

Florida Department of Health in Bay County Promotes Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2018



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Panama City - The week before Memorial Day (May 21 - 25, 2018) is Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. The goal of this week is to maximize the health benefits of swimming by promoting healthy and safe swimming. Just 2.5 hours of water-based (or other forms of) physical activity per week has health benefits for everyone. We each play a role in preventing illnesses, caused by germs in the water we share and swim in, and injuries, such as drowning or those caused by mishandling pool chemicals.

Illnesses caused by the germs in the places we swim: In 2000 – 2014 (the last years for which national data are available), approximately 500 outbreaks were linked to swimming in pools, hot tubs/spas, and water playgrounds. Most of these outbreaks caused by germs were caused by *Cryptosporidium* (or “Crypto” for short). Chlorine and other disinfectants kill most germs within minutes, but Crypto can survive for days even with disinfectants at levels recommended by the CDC. Diarrheal incidents in the water we share and swim in can easily spread germs and potentially cause outbreaks. It’s important to keep germs, feces, and urine out of the water.

Reduce the Risk of Illness

- Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea.
- Ensure that the chlorine and pH are at the proper levels.
- Shower with soap before you start swimming.
- Do not urinate or have a bowel movement in the pool.
- Don’t swallow the water.
- Take children on bathroom breaks every 60 minutes, and check diapers every 30-60 minutes.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or diaper changing area – not poolside – to keep germs away from the pool.

Drowning: Every day, two children less than 14 years old die from drowning. It is the leading cause of injury death for children 1-4 years old.

Keep Swimmers Safe in the Water

- Make sure everyone knows how to swim.
- Use life jackets appropriately.
- Provide continuous, attentive supervision close to swimmers.
- Know CPR (for older children and adults).
- Prevent access to water when pool is not in use.
 - Install and maintain barriers.
 - Use locks/alarms for windows and doors.

Injuries caused by mishandling pool chemicals: Pool chemicals are added to the water to kill germs and maximize disinfection. Each year, however, mishandling pool chemicals leads to 3,000-5,000 visits to emergency departments across the United States.

Swimming Pool Chemical Safety

- Read and follow directions on product labels.
- Wear appropriate safety equipment, such as goggles and masks, as directed, when handling pool chemicals.
- Secure pool chemicals to protect people and animals.
- Add pool chemicals poolside ONLY when directed by product label and when no one is in the pool.
- NEVER mix different pool chemicals with each other, especially chlorine products with acid.
- Pre-dissolve pool chemicals ONLY when directed by product label.
 - Add pool chemicals to water, NEVER water to pool chemicals.

For more information about Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2018, contact the Florida Department of Health in Bay County's Environmental Health Division at 850-481-4806 or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/observances/hss-week/index.html>.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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