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Pool Safety Tips for Fourth of July

The Fourth of July is coming soon and many of us will be enjoying a dip in a refreshing swimming pool until night falls and the fireworks begin. However, it is important to be aware of ways to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and drowning this weekend. Thousands of Americans get sick with RWIs every year. As you and your family enjoy water-related activities this weekend and throughout summer, the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) would like to remind you of some healthy pool safety tips to promote a safe and healthy recreational water experience.

RWIs can be caused by germs found in places where we swim. They are preventable and swimmers can protect themselves and other swimmers by practicing the following recommendations:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make others sick.
- Avoid getting water in your mouth and do not 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.
- If you have young children, remember to wash them before swimming (especially their rear ends) before entering the pool. Check your child's diaper every 30–60 minutes, and be sure to change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at the poolside. Germs can spread in and around the pool area. Take your kids to the bathroom every 30–60 minutes. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the leading cause of death for children 1 to 4 years old. A moment of inattention can lead to a tragic event. Parents and caregivers can keep their children safe from drowning by promoting the following safe behaviors:

– more –

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- Prepare by making sure that everyone knows how to swim, and older children and adults know CPR.
- When in the water, keep swimmers safe by:
    - Using properly fitting life jackets for younger or weaker swimmers.
    - Providing continuous, attentive supervision close to the swimmers, even if there is a lifeguard. Don't talk on the phone or leave to use the rest room unless you have designated someone else to keep a close eye on the swimmers.
    - Avoiding alcohol and drugs when swimming or watching swimmers.
- When NOT in the water, prevent access to the water by:
    - Installing and maintaining barriers (for pools: fencing enclosures with self-closing gates and weight-bearing covers).
    - Using locks or alarms for windows and doors.
    - Keep the pool area free of toys that children may be attracted to.

Additional information on RWIs, drowning prevention and pool safety can be found at www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming and www.poolsafely.gov.

To receive pool/spa updates and safety information, please subscribe to DEHS's Pool of Knowledge Newsletter. For more information, please contact DEHS at (800) 442-2283 or visit our website at www.sbcounty.gov/dph/dehs.

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