



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH investigates illnesses of children at Opelika Splash Park

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health is advising parents of children playing in the Splash Park at the Opelika Sportsplex and Aquatics Center between June 12 and June 20 to be alert for symptoms of illness. If a child has nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal cramps parents should seek medical attention for their child.

Dr. Mary McIntyre, medical officer of the Bureau of Communicable Disease, said, "Based on what we know now, four children who were in the Splash Park between June 12 and June 18 have been hospitalized at East Alabama Medical Center with gastrointestinal illness."

The Splash Park was closed June 20 for testing. The health department's Bureau of Clinical Laboratories is conducting tests on water samples and specimens from the affected children, and two children have been found positive for E. coli infection. At this time it appears that the common exposure is the Splash Pool at the Opelika Sportsplex and Aquatic Center.

The health department's Epidemiology Division is currently investigating this outbreak. Additional calls and follow-up with parents of children who may have been exposed can be expected.

The health department is also working with the medical community to better define the extent and cause of these illnesses. Doctors have been advised to notify the department's Epidemiology Division if any child in the Lee County or surrounding areas presents with symptoms of bacterial infections.

Health officials are working with city officials to evaluate and correct the problem.

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