



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Be aware that all bodies of water can pose health risks

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) would like to remind swimmers of ways to stay safe and healthy when swimming in any body of water. All bodies of water, both fresh and saltwater, can contain many microorganisms (germs) as part of natural flora and from animals or other species entering the water. Germs are not only found in natural bodies of water like lakes or rivers, but can also be found in chlorinated pools. Pools may contain bacteria and viruses in the swimming pool water, even when water is correctly treated.

“Infections from swimming are rare, but can occur,” Dr. Scott Harris, Infectious Disease physician with the ADPH, said. “Natural bacteria that exist in bodies of water can cause skin and soft-tissue infection. Be sure to follow safe swimming practices and follow up for any injuries you sustain in lakes, rivers, pools or coastal waters. These are important health measures.”

ADPH reminds all swimmers to take the following precautions:

- Shower after swimming.
- Wash hands before eating and after going to the bathroom.
- Avoid swimming if there are cuts or abrasions on the skin.
- Seek immediate medical care if a person sustains a laceration (cut of the skin) in the water.

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