



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Ensure healthy and safe swimming this season

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is participating in the annual Healthy and Safe Swimming Week, May 22-28, 2017, an initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The goal of this week is to maximize the health benefits of swimming by promoting healthy and safe water activities. Just 2.5 hours of water-based or other forms of physical exercise per week has health benefits for everyone. Each of us plays a role in preventing illnesses and injuries linked to the water we share and swim in this summer and year-round.

To protect swimmers' health and safety, state and local standards specify how to run public pools, hot tubs/spas, water playgrounds, and other places with treated water. Seven of Alabama's 67 counties have local swimming pool rules: Baldwin, Jefferson, Limestone, Mobile, Montgomery, Morgan and Shelby. These standards specify chemical concentrations and other important maintenance provisions to ensure a healthy swimming environment.

In 2011–2012, 90 outbreaks in the United States were linked to swimming; almost half of these outbreaks were caused by *Cryptosporidium* (or "Crypto" for short). Chlorine and other disinfectants kill most germs within minutes, but some, such as Crypto, can survive for days following recommended water treatment. Feces, urine, sweat and dirt from swimmers' bodies mix with chlorine and form chemicals that can make eyes red and even aggravate asthma. So it is important to keep such bodily secretions out of swimming water.

ADPH encourages those that plan to participate in recreational water activities during this season to take some of the following steps to prevent waterborne illnesses and diarrheal disease:

- Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea.
- Shower before getting in the water and after swimming.
- Do not pass urine or bowel movements in the water.
- Do not swallow the water.
- Wash hands before eating and after going to the bathroom

Avoid swimming if there are cuts or abrasions on the skin. If a person sustains a laceration (cut on the skin) while swimming, seek immediate medical care.

Every hour—everyone out!

- Take kids on bathroom breaks.
- Check diapers, and change them in a bathroom or diaper changing area—not poolside—to keep germs away from the pool.
- Do your part! Report if you or your child have a diarrheal incident while swimming.

For more information on Healthy and Safe Swimming Week, visit:

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/observances/hss-week/index.html or for general healthy swimming guidelines, visit: www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming.