



Press Release
For Immediate Release:
June 2, 2009

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Summer Water Safety – Be Water Aware!

Helena – Swimming is great fun, whether you're at home, at the local pool or waterpark, or at the lake. With summer just around the corner and the Last Chance Splash Water Park & Pool to open in mid-June, City Parks and Recreation along with Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department would like to highlight healthy swimming behaviors.

“Safety is our number one concern,” states Deb McLarnon, City of Helena, Aquatics Supervisor, “We want everyone to remain healthy and happy throughout the summer and practice safety first in the water. Be ‘*Water Aware*’ -- Keep a close eye on your child and follow all water safety rules.”

To help prevent drowning and water-related illnesses and injuries the Health Department, City Parks and Recreation, and the National Swimming Pool Foundation recommend following these simple healthy steps:

- Kids can drown in seconds and in silence. Drowning most commonly occurs in recreational settings, such as pools and open bodies of water. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 14. In fact, new research by the National SAFE KIDS and Johnson & Johnson revealed that 88% of children who drowned were under the supervision of another person, usually a family member. Parents may not realize that passive supervision, which they practice at home, is unacceptable in and around water. Always, closely supervise your children. Don't assume a lifeguard or others are watching your child. Remember, lifeguards are present as backup supervision.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower in warm water before swimming. Wash hands after eating or using the toilet or changing diapers. Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and warm water before entering the pool. Remember, germs on your body end up in the water.
- Have your child use the bathroom before entry (then shower) and make scheduled bathroom breaks. Waiting to hear “I have to go” may mean it's too late.
- Do not swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick, even in chlorinated water. This is especially important for kids in diapers. Even swim diapers leak.
- Only change child's diapers in bathrooms or diaper-changing area, not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects around the pool and cause illness. And keep food in designated areas.
- Don't swallow the pool water. You share the water with everyone in the pool, lake or hot tub. If someone with diarrhea contaminates the water, swallowing the water can make you sick. Avoid getting water in your mouth. Chlorine does a good job of killing most bacteria, but it takes time to work and parasites like Cryptosporidium are chlorine-resistant.

- No diving in shallow water. The depth for safe diving is nine to ten feet. It takes less than two seconds to render a person quadriplegic.
- All non-swimmers should wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved lifejacket.

“Put safety first when it comes to engaging in water activities. We want everyone to be active and enjoy swimming, but we want everyone to do it safely,” said McLarnon.

For more information on water safety contact Deb McLarnon, Aquatics Supervisor, City of Helena, 447-1559; Laura Hendley, Environmental Health Specialist, Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department, 447-8352 or visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming, www.nspf.org, www.ci.helena.mt.us/departments/parks-recreation, www.co.lewis-clark.mt.us.

The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents

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