

Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week 2014 Toolkit

Healthy and Safe Swimming: We're in it Together

Prevention & Response Tools for Public Health Professionals

Contents:

- **Cover letter** from CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, and National Center for Environmental Health
- **Outreach suggestions** for community partners and the public
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- **Sample proclamation** for local customization



Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Dear Colleague:

The week before Memorial Day, May 19–25, 2014, marks the tenth annual **Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week**. As outdoor pools and beaches around the country open and Americans get ready for a summer full of swimming, this is an ideal time to maximize the health benefits of recreational water activities by promoting healthy and safe swimming in your community. RWII Prevention Week is also a great time to reach out to public pool operators, beach managers, the media, residential pool owners, and the general public to initiate action.

This year's RWII Prevention Week theme is "Healthy and Safe Swimming: We're in it Together." As swimmers, aquatics and beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials, we each play a role in preventing

1. drowning,
2. pool chemical—associated health events, and
3. recreational water—associated outbreaks.

Additionally, the **Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC; www.cdc.gov/mahc/)** reached an important milestone in its development. The first complete "knitted" version of the MAHC was released March 28, 2014 for a second of two public comment periods. This version interweaves together all modules that have been developed, posted for public comment, and revised based on public feedback. **Please provide comments by May 27, 2014 and make sure public health's voice is heard in the MAHC development process.** Comments will be incorporated, and the 1st edition of the MAHC will be released in summer 2014.

To encourage and support your RWII Prevention Week efforts, we have provided a health promotion tool kit, which includes community outreach suggestions; a web-based resource list; and a sample press release, op-ed piece, and proclamation. We hope you will find these useful as you engage your community in RWII Prevention Week awareness efforts and educational activities. Please forward this message and its attachments to your communications, environmental health, and epidemiology colleagues so that they can collaborate with you in this important public health initiative.

We would love to hear about the activities in your area related to RWII Prevention Week; please send details to healthywater@cdc.gov.

For additional information about Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week, visit:

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/rwi_prevention_week.htm

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**National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID)
National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)**

**Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week: May 19–25, 2014
Outreach Suggestions for Community Partners and the Public**

All Audiences

- Update (or create) RWII Prevention Week page on your agency’s website.
 - Copy content from CDC’s Healthy Swimming and Injury Prevention websites while maintaining the look and feel of your website (i.e., content syndication). Visit <http://tools.cdc.gov/syndication> or contact healthywater@cdc.gov for more information.
 - Include links to CDC’s Healthy Swimming and Water-Related Injury Prevention, EPA’s Beaches, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s PoolSafely websites (see “Links” page in toolkit).

Media

- Provide press release to media outlets (see “Sample Press Release” in toolkit).
 - Share information on:
 - The latest public health data on illness and injury associated with recreational water.
 - Steps we can all take to prevent these illnesses and injuries.
- Hold press conference during RWII Prevention Week.
- Write op-ed piece on healthy swimming (see “Sample Op-Ed” in toolkit) in your local newspaper.

Swimmers and Parents

- Disseminate healthy and safe swimming promotion materials at pools, beaches, child care centers, etc.
 - Download and share CDC materials: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/index.html.
- Disseminate healthy and safe swimming messages through newsletters, blogs, and other media distributed by schools, camps, fairs, etc.

Aquatic-Facility Operators and Beach Managers

- Include information on healthy and safe swimming in pool operator and beach manager training.
- Collaborate with pool operators and beach managers to promote RWII Prevention Week.
 - Provide healthy and safe swimming promotion materials.
- Promote learn-to-swim and CPR training opportunities as community drowning prevention strategies.
 - Check out the World’s Largest Swim Lesson: www.worldslargestswimminglesson.org/.

Healthcare Providers

- Provide healthy and safe swimming promotion materials.
- Engage in activities of your local chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org/) or other organization for healthcare professionals.

Community Leaders

- Create fact sheets for community leaders (e.g., program administrators, boards of health, and elected officials) detailing specifics about your agency’s RWII Prevention Week efforts.
- Collaborate on a RWII Prevention Week proclamation (see “Sample Proclamation” in toolkit).

Let us know about your activities related to Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week!

Email us at healthywater@cdc.gov.

**Recreational Water Illness (RWI) and Injury Prevention Week 2014
Links to CDC Healthy and Safe Swimming Information and Resources**

| General Information | |
|---|--|
| Water-Related Injury Prevention Site | www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/index.html |
| Healthy Swimming Site | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming |
| Overview of RWIs | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/ |
| Prevention Resources | |
| Injury & Skin Cancer Prevention | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/injury/ |
| CPSC's Pool Safely | www.poolsafely.gov/ |
| Healthy Swimming Brochures, Posters, Etc. | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources |
| Social Media Library NEW | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/socialmedia-library.html |
| Triple A's of Healthy Swimming | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/triple-a-healthy-swimming.html |
| Gold Medalist Swims Healthy NEW | www.cdc.gov/features/AmandaBeard/ |
| Illnesses and Germs Spread Through Recreational Water | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/fact-sheets/#illnesses |
| Swim Diapers/Swim Pants | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/swim-diapers-swim-pants.html |
| Breastfeeding in Pools and Hot Tubs/Spas | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/breastfeeding-in-pools.html |
| Ozone and UV Pool Disinfection NEW pages coming soon | http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/disinfection-remediation-pools-hot-tubs/uv.html http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/disinfection-remediation-pools-hot-tubs/ozone.html |
| Chloramines NEW pages coming soon | http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/chloramines.html http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/design-operation-pools-hot-tubs/chloramines.html |
| Resources for Public Health Professionals | |
| Healthy Swimming Data/Statistics | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/data/ |
| 2009–2010 Outbreak Reports NEW | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/surveillance/rec-water-surveillance-reports.html www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6301a3.htm?s_cid=mm6301a3_w |
| Online Environmental Public Health Training: Swimming Pools and Recreational Facilities | www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/eLearn/EPHOC.htm |
| Model Aquatic Health Code | www.cdc.gov/mahc |
| Press and Matte Releases | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/newsroom/press-releases/ |
| Resources for Aquatic-Facility Operators | |
| Fecal Incident Response Recommendations | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/swimming/pools/fecal-incident-response-recommendations.pdf |
| Recommendations for Preventing Pool Chemical-Associated Injuries | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/preventing-pool-chemical-injuries.html |
| Animals and Pools | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/animals/ |
| Open Water Resources | |
| EPA's Beaches Website | http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/beaches/index.cfm |
| General Info: Oceans, Lakes, Rivers | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/oceans/ |
| Harmful Algal Blooms | www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab/ www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainmented/tips/algalblooms.html |
| Healthy Swimming Links by Additional Audiences | |
| Medical Professionals | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/audience-medicalprofessionals.html |
| En Español | www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/audience-espanol.html |

Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week 2014
Sample Press Release

For Release [date]

Contact: Name, title
Phone/e-mail

Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week 2014
Healthy and Safe Swimming: We're in it Together

<City, state> — The week before Memorial Day (May 19–25, 2014) is Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week. The goal of RWII Prevention Week is to maximize the health benefits of swimming by promoting healthy and safe swimming. Just 2.5 hours of water-based (or other forms of) physical activity per week has health benefits across a lifetime. We each play a role in preventing injuries, such as drowning or from mishandling pool chemicals, and illnesses caused by germs in the places we swim.

| Why Is This Important? | Simple and Effective Prevention Steps We Can All Take |
|--|--|
| <p>Drownings: Every day, two children less than 14 years old die from drowning. It is the leading cause of injury death for children 1–4 years old.</p> <p>For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/index.html</p> | <p>Keep swimmers safe in the water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure everyone knows how to swim. • Use life jackets appropriately. • Provide continuous, attentive supervision close to swimmers. • Know CPR (for older children and adults). <p>Prevent access to water when pool is not in use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install and maintain barriers like 4-sided fencing and weight-bearing pool covers. • Use locks/alarms for windows and doors. |
| <p>Injuries caused by mishandling pool chemicals (for pool operators and residential pool owners): Pool chemicals are added to the water to kill germs and maximize disinfection. Each year, however, mishandling pool chemicals leads to 3,000–5,000 visits to emergency departments across the U.S.</p> <p>For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/preventing-pool-chemical-injuries.html</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and follow directions on product labels. • Wear appropriate safety equipment, such as goggles and masks, as directed, when handling pool chemicals. • Secure pool chemicals to protect people and animals. • Add pool chemicals poolside ONLY when directed by product label and when no one is in the water. <p>Prevent violent, potentially explosive, reactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEVER mix different pool chemicals with each other, especially chlorine products with acid . • Pre-dissolve pool chemicals ONLY when directed by product label. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Add pool chemical to water, NEVER water to pool chemical. |
| <p>Illnesses caused by the germs in the places we swim: In 2009–2010, 57 outbreaks were linked to pools. Remember, chlorine and other disinfectants kill most germs within minutes, but some can survive for days. Pee and sweat mix with chlorine and form chemicals that can make our eyes red and trigger asthma attacks. So it's important to keep germs, poop, and pee out of the water we all swim in.</p> <p>For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming</p> | <p>All swimmers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea. • Check the chlorine level and pH with test strips before getting into water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proper chlorine levels (1–3 mg/L or parts per million [ppm]) and pH (7.2–7.8) maximize germ-killing power. • Shower with soap before you start swimming. • Don't poop or pee in the water. • Don't swallow the water. <p>Parents of young children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take children on bathroom breaks every 60 minutes, or check diapers every 30–60 minutes. |

Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week 2014
Sample Op-Ed

It's Not the Chlorine in the Pool that's Making Your Eyes Red...

Dear Editor,

Have your eyes ever started to sting and turn red when you were swimming in a pool? Did you think it was because of the chlorine in the water? Have you ever walked into an indoor pool area, gotten a whiff of a strong chemical smell, and thought, "Wow, there's a lot of chlorine in the pool?" It's actually not the chlorine. It's certain types of chloramines, or what you get when chlorine combines with what comes out of (e.g., pee) or washes off of (e.g., sweat and personal care products) swimmers' bodies. These chloramines irritate the eyes and respiratory tract and can even aggravate asthma and cause a strong chemical smell at indoor pools. These chloramines are different from the type of chloramine which is sometimes used to treat our drinking water

Healthy swimming depends on what we swimmers bring into the pool—and what we keep out of it. We all share the water we swim in, and we each need to do our part to keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy.

In addition to being an all-American way to have fun with family and friends, swimming is a good form of physical activity. Just 2.5 hours of water-based (or other forms of) physical activity per week has health benefits across a lifetime. Water-based physical activity can protect the health of pregnant women by helping to regulate body temperature and minimize stress on joints during exercise as well as help prevent or control diabetes brought on by pregnancy. Water-based physical activity also improves women's bone health after menopause and improves older adults' ability carry out everyday activities. The health benefits for children are wide-reaching, as well. Studies have shown that children with asthma might have fewer symptoms when swimming regularly compared with other asthmatic children, and that children in general benefit socially from contact with other children at recreational water venues.

Popular Olympic swimmers have publicly admitted to peeing in the pool. They've laughed about it, and comedians have joked about it. But really, where else is it acceptable to pee in public? Mixing chlorine and pee not only creates certain types of chloramines—it also uses up the chlorine in the pool, which would otherwise kill germs. These germs can get into the water when they wash off of swimmers' bodies or when infected swimmers have diarrheal incidents in the water. Just one diarrheal incident can release enough germs into the water that swallowing a mouthful can cause diarrhea lasting 2–3 weeks.

Even when the levels of chlorine and other pool water treatments are well maintained, they don't kill germs instantly. *Cryptosporidium* (or Crypto), the leading cause of disease outbreaks linked to pools, can survive in a properly chlorinated pool for more than 10 days. In 2009–2010 (the last year for which national data are available), 57 disease outbreaks linked to pools were detected in the United States.

Almost half (24[42%]) of these outbreaks were caused by Crypto and they sickened more than 400 people. Another 18 (32%) outbreaks were caused by germs that are killed by chlorine within minutes.

<Consider substituting national statistics with state and local statistics to increase local interest.>

These statistics remind us that the water we swim is not germ free and why it's important for each of us to do our part to keep germs and poop out of the water in the first place.

To help prevent chloramines from forming and to protect yourself and your family and friends from germs, here are a few simple and effective steps all swimmers can take each time we swim:

- **Keep the poop and pee out of the water.**
 - Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
 - Shower with soap before you start swimming.
 - Take regular bathroom breaks.
 - Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- **Check the chlorine level and pH before getting into the water.**
 - Proper chlorine levels (1–3 mg/L or parts per million [ppm]) and pH (7.2–7.8) maximize germ-killing power.
 - Most superstores, hardware stores, and pool-supply stores sell pool test strips.
- **Don't swallow the water you swim in.**

Parents of young children should take a few extra steps:

- **Take children on bathroom breaks every 60 minutes or check diapers every 30–60 minutes.**
 - Change diapers in the bathroom or diaper-changing area and not at poolside where germs can rinse into the water.

These steps will help you minimize risk of illness and maximize health benefits and pool enjoyment. Healthy swimming is not just about the steps the pool operators and pool inspectors take—so let's all do our part to help keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy this summer and year-round.

Remember...Think Healthy. Swim Healthy. Be Healthy!

Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week 2014 Sample Proclamation

Adapted from proclamation developed by

Environmental Management Department of Sacramento County, California

RESOLUTION OF <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>

PROCLAIMING MAY 19–25, 2014 AS

“RECREATIONAL WATER ILLNESS AND INJURY PREVENTION WEEK”

IN <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION>

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON> considers the health and safety of its residents and visitors its highest priority; and

WHEREAS, during the week of May 19–25, 2014, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY>, together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will be conducting educational outreach to the public on preventing recreational water illness and injury (RWII) — i.e., illness and injury linked to the water in which we swim; and

WHEREAS, on behalf of the residents and visitors of <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION>, we are pleased to join local, state and federal agencies, in ensuring healthy and safe swimming in <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION>; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the ongoing efforts made by the dedicated men and women who are trained to ensure health and safety standards are met at public swimming pools and hot tubs/spas in this <State/County/City>; and

WHEREAS, the theme of Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week 2014 is *Healthy and Safe Swimming: We’re in it Together*, because as swimmers, aquatics and beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials, we each play a role in preventing drowning, illnesses caused by germs in the places we swim, and injuries caused by mishandling pool chemicals; and

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY> provides information to the public on actively protecting their health and safety and that of others; and

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY> provides <INSERT LIST OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY’S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING, INCLUDING ANY TRAINING WORKSHOPS FOR POOL OPERATORS AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES>; and

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY> conducts over <INSERT COUNT> inspections of public swimming pools and hot tubs/spas; and

WHEREAS, the week of May 19–25, 2014 has been set aside to raise public awareness of the importance of healthy and safe swimming and to reinforce education among those that operate and maintain swimming pools and hot tubs/spas;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>, does hereby proclaim the week of May 19–25, 2014 as **“RECREATIONAL WATER ILLNESS AND INJURY PREVENTION WEEK”** in <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION> in order to focus attention on the importance of preventing RWIIs for the protection of our residents and visitors now and throughout the year;

<ADD JURISDICTION-SPECIFIC AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES, SEALS, ETC.>