



Dear Colleague:

The week of May 19–25, 2008 marks the fourth annual **Recreational Water Illness (RWI) Prevention Week**. Since this is the week prior to the traditional start of the summer swim season, RWI Prevention Week will be an opportunity to increase awareness in your community related to recreational water illnesses and healthy swimming practices.

State and local health departments across the country investigated more recreational water illness outbreaks in 2007 than ever before. This upsurge is being driven by an increase in the number of RWI outbreaks caused by *Cryptosporidium* ("Crypto"), a chlorine resistant parasite, and is primarily associated with treated recreational water venues, such as pools and water parks. While seven RWI outbreaks caused by Crypto were identified in 2004, CDC already has received at least 18 preliminary reports on such outbreaks for 2007. This number is likely to rise as 2007 RWI outbreak numbers are finalized. Remember, since Crypto is chlorine resistant, even a well maintained pool can transmit this parasite. Therefore, it is very important that public health officials, pool operators, and beach managers work together to educate the public about its role in preventing RWIs by keeping Crypto and other pathogens out of recreational water, both treated and untreated (e.g., lakes and oceans). **RWI Prevention Week** is an ideal time to reach out to pool operators, beach managers, the media, and the public with prevention messages to raise awareness and initiate action.

Additional information about Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week 2008 can be found at [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/rwi\\_prevention\\_week.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/rwi_prevention_week.htm)

We have provided you with a health promotion tool kit and sample press release to be used as a source for ideas and actions in conjunction with national publicity planned for this week and your community's own local efforts. Please forward this message to your aquatic health program staff so that they can be involved in this major Healthy Swimming Program Initiative. This is an excellent opportunity to bring attention to this important environmental health program, as well as assist in helping your community members stay healthy.

CDC's Healthy Swimming Program continues the longstanding collaboration between epidemiologic and environmental health staff at the agency. Let us know about the activities in your area related to Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week by sending emails to [ehsb@cdc.gov](mailto:ehsb@cdc.gov).

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