



Placer County Health and Human Services Department

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Press Release

NATIONAL RECREATIONAL WATER ILLNESS PREVENTION WEEK

Auburn, CA.—The week preceding Memorial Day (May 19–25, 2008) has been designated as National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week.

The goal of this year's recognition is to highlight the importance of healthy swimming behaviors in preventing recreational water illnesses (RWIs). State and local health departments across the country investigated more RWI 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, even a well maintained pool can transmit Crypto. Placer County Environmental Health will be starting their annual inspections of the public swimming pools and spas in June. The inspection will check for compliance with the public health and safety requirements to help enhance fun and safe recreational water activities.

Awareness of recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and healthy swimming behaviors play an important role in stopping transmission of RWIs. Germs on and in swimmers' bodies end up in the water and can make other people sick. Even healthy swimmers can get sick from RWIs, but the young, elderly, pregnant women and immunosuppressed persons are especially at risk. Specific actions you can take to promote healthy swimming include:

1. Do not swim when you have diarrhea.
2. Do not swallow pool water or get pool water in your mouth.
3. Shower before swimming (children too!).
4. Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
5. Take children on bathroom breaks or change diapers often.
6. Change children's diapers in a bathroom, not at poolside.

Recreational water venues are important sites for exercise and leisure. To make this summer a Healthy Swimming experience, the Placer County Environmental Health Consumer Protection Team and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge swimmers to continue to enjoy swimming, but only after adopting healthy swimming behaviors to reduce the risk of recreational water illnesses.

For more information about Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week and Healthy Swimming, contact Richard Brown or Bill Foster or visit the Placer County Environmental Health Website at http://www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/hhs/env_health.aspx or the CDC web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming>.

