

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2015 Toolkit

Make a Healthy Splash: Share the Fun, Not the Germs

Health Swimming Promotion Resources for Public Health Professionals

Contents:

- **Cover letter** from CDC's
 - National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases,
 - National Center for Environmental Health, and
 - National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
- **Suggestions for outreach** to community partners and the public
- **List of links** for CDC Healthy Swimming information and resources
- **Sample press release** for local customization
- **Sample op-ed** for local customization
- **Sample proclamation** for local customization



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



March 1, 2015

Dear Colleague:

The week before Memorial Day, May 18–24, 2015, marks the eleventh annual **Healthy and Safe Swimming Week (formerly known as Recreational Water Illness and Injury 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. Healthy and Safe Swimming 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 Healthy and Safe Swimming Week theme is "Make a Healthy Splash: Share the Fun, Not the Germs." It focuses on a few easy and effective steps each of us can take to maximize the health benefits that we, our families, and our friends get from swimming.

To encourage and support your Healthy and Safe Swimming 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 resources useful as you engage your community in Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. Please forward this message and its attachments to your health 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 Healthy and Safe Swimming Week; please send details to healthywater@cdc.gov.

For additional information about Healthy and Safe Swimming Week, visit:

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/observances/hss-week/index.html

Finally, as many of you know, the first edition of the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC; www.cdc.gov/mahc) was released last August. The first biennial meeting of the Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC) will be held in Scottsdale, AZ on October 6–7, 2015. This meeting is the opportunity for CMAHC members to vote on proposed MAHC changes. Become a CMAHC member today (www.cmahc.org/membership.php) and help ensure that public health's voice is heard!

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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)**

**Healthy and Safe Swimming Week
May 18–24, 2015**

Outreach Suggestions for Community Partners and the Public

All Audiences

- Update (or create) Healthy and Safe Swimming Week webpage on your agency’s website.
 - Copy content from CDC’s Healthy Swimming website and safe swimming webpages 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 website and safe swimming pages and EPA’s Beaches and CPSC’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 associated with recreational water.
 - Steps we can all take to prevent these illnesses.
- Hold press conference during Healthy and Safe Swimming 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, childcare centers, etc.
 - Download and share CDC materials: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/index.html.
- Disseminate healthy and safe swimming messages through newsletters, social media, etc. 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 Healthy and Safe Swimming 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 materials.
- Engage 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 Healthy and Safe Swimming Week efforts.
- Collaborate on a Healthy and Safe Swimming Week proclamation (see “Sample Proclamation” in toolkit).

Let us know about your activities related to Healthy and Safe Swimming Week!

Email us at healthywater@cdc.gov.

Health and Safe Swimming Week 2015
Links to CDC Healthy and Safe Swimming Information and Resources

General Information	
Healthy Swimming Site	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming
Healthy and Safe Swimming Week	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/observances/hss-week/index.html
Safe Swimming Links	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/injury/index.html
CPSC's Pool Safely	www.poolsafely.gov/pool-spa-safety-act/
Prevention Resources	
Swimmer Protection Links	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/index.html
Health Swimming Materials	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources
Healthy Swimming Brochure NEW	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/brochures.html Printed brochures will be available for FREE in Spring 2015
Missy Franklin Swims Healthy NEW	www.cdc.gov/features/swimming-missy-franklin/
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
Resources for Public Health Professionals	
Healthy Swimming Data/Statistics	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/data/
MMWR Outbreak Summary Reports	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/surveillance/rec-water-surveillance-reports.html Report on 2011–2012 outbreaks to be published May 2015
Online Environmental Public Health Course	www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/eLearn/EPHOC.htm (See Swimming Pools and Recreational Facilities)
Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) NEW	www.cdc.gov/mahc 1st edition now available
Conference for the MAHC (CMAHC) NEW	www.cmahc.org Become a CMAHC member today to be eligible to vote on MAHC changes and help ensure that public health's voice is heard!
Resources for Aquatic-Facility Operators	
Fecal Incident Response Recommendations	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/swimming/pools/fecal-incident-response-recommendations.pdf
Pool Chemical Safety	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/entertained/tips/algalblooms.html www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6301a3.htm?s_cid=mm6301a3_w
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

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2015
Sample Press Release

For Release [date]

Contact: Name, title
Phone/e-mail

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2015
Make a Healthy Splash: Share the Fun, Not the Germs!

<City, state> — The week before Memorial Day (May 18–24, 2015) is Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. The goal of this 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 illnesses, caused by germs in the water we share and swim in, and injuries, such as drowning or those caused by mishandling pool chemicals.

Why Is This Important?	A Few Simple and Effective Prevention Steps We Can All Take
<p>Illnesses caused by the germs in the places we swim: In 2011–2012, almost 100 outbreaks were linked to swimming. Remember, chlorine and other disinfectants kill most germs within minutes, but some can survive for days. Pee, poop, sweat, and dirt from swimmers’ bodies mix with chlorine and form chemicals that can make our eyes red and trigger asthma attacks. So it’s important to keep germs, pee, poop, sweat, and dirt out of the water we share and swim in.</p> <p>For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea. • Shower before you get in the water. • Don’t pee or poop in the water. • Don’t swallow the water. <p>Every hour—everyone out!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Reapply sunscreen. • Drink plenty of fluids.
<p>Drowning: 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/waterinjuries-factsheet.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. <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 of pool chemicals by pool operators and residential pool owners 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.

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2015
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 poop) or washes off of (e.g., sweat and dirt) 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 to 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 2011–2012 (the last years for which national data are available), >70 outbreaks linked to pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas were

detected in the United States. Half of these outbreaks were caused by Crypto. **<NOTE: Consider substituting national statistics with state and local statistics to increase local interest.>** These statistics remind us that the water we share and swim in is not germ free and why it's important for each of us to do our part to keep germs, pee, poop, sweat, and dirt out of the water in the first place.

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

- Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea.
- Shower before you get in the water.
- Don't pee or poop in the water.
- Don't swallow the water.

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.
- Reapply sunscreen.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

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!

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2015

Sample Proclamation

Adapted from proclamation developed by

Environmental Management Department of Sacramento County, California

RESOLUTION OF <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>

PROCLAIMING MAY 18–24, 2015 AS

“HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING 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 18–24, 2015, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY>, together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will be conducting educational outreach to prevent illness and injury linked to the water we share and swim in and thus maximize swimming’s health benefits for all; and

WHEREAS, the week of May 18–24, 2015 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, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas; 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, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas in this <State/County/City>, in part, by conducting over <INSERT COUNT> inspections of public swimming pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas each year; and

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY> also provides information on how to actively protect health and safety of all; and

WHEREAS, the theme of Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2015 is *Make a Healthy Splash: Share the Fun, Not the Germs*, because as swimmers, parents, aquatics and beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials, we each play a role in preventing illnesses caused by germs in the places we swim; 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

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>, does hereby proclaim the week of May 18–24, 2015 as **“HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING WEEK”** in <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION> to focus attention on the importance of preventing illness and injury linked to the water which we share and swim in for the protection of our residents and visitors now and throughout the year.

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