

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sun, fun and Recreational Water Illness (RWI) awareness

(Lawrence, KS) – Basking in the sun at a local pool or lake is something families love to do during the summer months. But once you enter the water, how safe are you? Did you know chlorine doesn't kill all germs?

Those who swim in lakes and ponds are particularly susceptible to parasites such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*, which cause diarrhea. *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* can be found in infected people's stool and are not visible to the naked eye. These chlorine-resistant parasites also are protected by an outer shell that allows them to survive long periods of time in water or on surfaces.

In the week leading up to Memorial Day (known as National Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week) keep in mind the ways you can decrease your risk of illness:

- Don't swallow contaminated water from pools, hot tubs, Jacuzzis, fountains, lakes or other bodies of water.
- Avoid putting objects in your mouth that may have come in contact with the stool of an infected person or animal.

Follow the Six PLEAs for Healthy Swimming:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- Don't swallow the water. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
- Take children on bathroom breaks or change diapers often. Waiting to hear, "I have to go," may mean that it's too late.

- Change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the water and spread illness.
- Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming.

The Health Department's Environmental Health program performs routine inspections of public swimming pools and spas to ensure they are safe for the public.

For more information on recreation water illness or pool inspections, call the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department at (785) 843-3060 or visit the agency's website at www.ldchealth.org.

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