



2019 HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING WEEK TOOLKIT



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

CS302806A

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Dear Colleagues:

March 26, 2019

The week before Memorial Day, May 20–26, 2019, marks the 15th annual **Healthy and Safe Swimming Week (HSSW)**. This is a great time to engage the media, the public, operators of public treated recreational water venues (e.g., pools, hot tubs/spas, and water playgrounds), beach managers, and owners of residential pools or hot tubs/spas to maximize the health benefits of water-based physical activity by minimizing the risk of illness and injury.

This year's HSSW theme is "Pool Chemistry for Healthy & Safe Swimming." Key messages will focus on simple steps pool operators and owners can take to **prevent pool chemical injuries**, such as reading and following directions on product labels of pool chemicals before using them. The public can also take steps to promote healthy and safe swimming through pool chemistry, such as using test strips to check disinfectant level and pH before getting in the water. In mid-May, we will release a report in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* that summarizes 10 years (2008–2017) of data on pool chemical injuries that lead to U.S. emergency department visits and occur in public or residential settings.

We developed this HSSW toolkit to help you promote healthy and safe swimming in the communities you serve:

- Community outreach suggestions;
- Online resources;
- Sample press release, feature, and proclamation; and
- Social media messages.

Finally, as many of you know, **the third edition of the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC)** was released in July 2018. CDC updates the MAHC every 3 years in coordination with the **Council for the MAHC** and encourages public health officials to **submit MAHC change requests** to CMAHC by January 6, 2020 to be considered for the 2021 MAHC (4th edition). We are also in the process of releasing mini-MAHCs to help environmental health practitioners and pool operators quickly find relevant MAHC guidelines that focus on specific public health issues. The following mini-MAHCs have been developed and posted or will be posted shortly: **Reducing the Spread of Cryptosporidium**, Hygiene & Swim Diapers, Pool Chemical Safety, and Preventing Chlorine Gassing.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to promoting healthy and safe swimming. We encourage you to share this toolkit with your network to help keep swimmers safe this summer swim season and year-round.



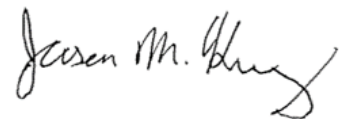
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COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUGGESTIONS



ALL AUDIENCES

- Update or create healthy and safe swimming web content on your agency's website.
 - › Consider having **CDC's Healthy Swimming syndicated content** on your website without having to maintain it. Your site's colors, fonts, navigation, and other unique properties remain unaffected.
 - » Contact IMTech@cdc.gov for more information.
 - › Add links from this toolkit's "Web-based Resource List," which includes URLs to CDC websites such as Healthy Swimming, Harmful Algal Blooms, and *Naegleria*, and from partner websites, such as the Environmental Protection Agency and Consumer Product Safety Commission.



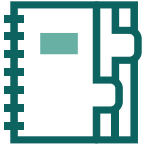
MEDIA

- **Provide press release to media outlets** (see "Sample Press Release" in toolkit).
Share information on
 - › Latest public health data on illness and injury associated with recreational water.
 - › Steps we can all take to prevent recreational water-associated illness and injury.
- **Hold press conference** during HSSW.
 - › **Have media shadow staff** doing pool inspection or monitoring of water quality at beach.
- **Write healthy swimming feature** (see "Sample Feature" in toolkit) for your state/local newspaper.



BATHERS AND PARENTS

- **Share healthy and safe swimming promotion materials** at schools, camps, childcare centers, fairs, etc.
- **Use social media** to spread the word about healthy and safe swimming (see "Suggested Social Media Messages" in toolkit).
- **Disseminate healthy and safe swimming messages in newsletters or e-mail announcements** for schools, camps, childcare centers, hotels/motels, apartment/condominium complexes, fitness clubs, etc.



PUBLIC TREATED AQUATIC-FACILITY OPERATORS AND BEACH MANAGERS

- Include prevention of recreational water-associated illness and injury in training of pool operator and beach managers.
- Provide healthy and safe swimming **promotion materials** for patrons and staff.
- Promote learn-to-swim and CPR training opportunities as community drowning prevention strategies.
 - › Check out [World's Largest Swim Lesson](#).
 - › Check out [Watersafety USA](#).
- Increase public pool operators' awareness of the [Model Aquatic Health Code](#).



RESIDENTIAL POOL OR HOT TUB OWNERS

- Disseminate healthy and safe swimming **promotion materials** at pool and hot tub/spa stores.
- Hold pool chemical safety seminar for owners of residential pools or hot tubs/spas.



HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Provide healthy and safe swimming **promotion materials** for patients and their families and staff.
- Engage your local chapter of the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) or other organizations for healthcare professionals.



COMMUNITY LEADERS

- Create fact sheets for community leaders (such as program administrators, boards of health, and elected officials) detailing specifics about your agency's HSSW efforts.
- Collaborate on HSSW 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

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week

MAY 20–26, 2019



ONLINE RESOURCES

GENERAL INFORMATION

Healthy Swimming	www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming
Healthy and Safe Swimming Week	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/observances/hss-week/index.html
Healthy Swimming Fact Sheets	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/materials/fact-sheets.html
Oceans, Lakes, & Rivers	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/oceans-lakes-rivers/index.html
CPSC's Pool Safely	www.poolsafely.gov
EPA's Beaches	www.epa.gov/beaches

PREVENTION RESOURCES

How to Swim Healthy	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/swim-healthy.html
Healthy Swimming Promotion Materials	http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/materials/index.html NEW Free Posters (English and Spanish): https://wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/CDCInfoOnDemand.aspx?ProgramID=93 Harmful algal blooms: www.cdc.gov/habs/materials/index.html <i>Naegleria</i> : www.cdc.gov/parasites/naegleria/materials.html
Swim Diapers and Swim Pants	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/swim-diapers-swim-pants.html
Drowning, Injury, & Sun Protection	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/drowning-injury-sun-protection.html
Breastfeeding in Pools & Hot Tubs/Spas	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/breastfeeding-in-pools.html

FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Publications, Data, & Statistics	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/publications.html
MMWR Outbreak Summary Reports	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/surveillance/rec-water-surveillance-reports.html
Environmental Public Health Course	www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/eLearn/EPHOC.htm
Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC)	www.cdc.gov/mahc
State-based Information	http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/states.html

FOR PUBLIC TREATED AQUATIC-FACILITY OPERATORS

Fecal Incident and Outbreak Response	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/aquatics-professionals/fecalresponse.html
Animals & Pools	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/residential/animals/index.html
Pool Chemical Safety	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/aquatics-professionals/preventing-pool-chemical-events.html

FOR RESIDENTIAL POOL OR HOT TUB OWNERS

Disinfection & Testing

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/residential/disinfection-testing.html>

Cleaning and Remediation

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/residential/cleaning-remediation.html>

FOR BEACH MANAGERS AND THOSE WHO SWIM IN FRESH- OR MARINE WATER

Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB)

www.cdc.gov/habs/index.html

–associated illness

EPA's Cyanobacterial HABs in Water

www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanobacterial-harmful-algal-blooms-water

Naegleria ("The Brain-Eating Ameba")

www.cdc.gov/parasites/naegleria

FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Healthcare Professionals

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/medical-professionals/index.html

Abbreviations: CPSC = Consumer Product Safety Commission, EPA = Environmental Protection Agency

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

The following information summarizes a variety of healthy and safe swimming messages, intended to be customized to best meet each state or local community's priorities and needs before distributing. States or local communities can choose which messages to highlight in a press release for Healthy and Safe Swimming Week from the table below.

For Release [date]

Contact: Name, title
Phone/e-mail

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2019

<City, State> — The week before Memorial Day (May 20–26, 2019) is Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. The goal of this awareness week is to maximize the health benefits of swimming by minimizing the risk of illness and injury. Just 2.5 hours of physical activity every week, including water-based physical activity, can benefit everyone's health. Each of us plays a role in preventing illnesses and injuries linked to the water we swim, play, and relax in and share, this summer and year-round.

Why Is This Important?

Injuries caused by mishandling pool chemicals:

Pool chemicals are added to maintain water quality (for example, to kill germs). Each year, however, mishandling pool chemicals when treating public or residential/backyard pools, hot tubs/spas, and water playgrounds leads to 3,000–5,000 visits to U.S. emergency departments.

For more info, visit

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/aquatics-professionals/preventing-pool-chemical-events.html.

Illnesses caused by the germs in pools, hot tubs/spas and water playgrounds:

During 2000–2014, nearly 500 outbreaks were linked to pools, hot tubs/spas, and water playgrounds. Most of the outbreaks were caused by germs *Cryptosporidium* (or "Crypto"), *Legionella*, or *Pseudomonas*.

Healthy swimming is not just about the steps 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.

For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming.

A Few Simple but Effective Prevention Steps We Can All Take

Operators and residential owners:

- Read and follow directions on product labels.
- Wear appropriate safety equipment, such as goggles, when handling pool chemicals. Check product labels for directions on what to wear.
- Secure pool chemicals to protect people, particularly young children, and animals.
- Add pool chemical poolside **ONLY** when directed by product label and when no one is in the water.

Prevent violent, potentially explosive, reactions.

- **NEVER** mix different pool chemicals with each other, particularly chlorine products and acid.
- Pre-dissolve pool chemicals **ONLY** when directed by product label.
 - › Add pool chemical to water, **NEVER** water to pool chemical.

Order **FREE** printed and laminated poster on safe storage and poster on safe use: wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/CDCInfoOnDemand.aspx?ProgramID=93.

Everyone:

- Don't swim or let your kids swim if sick with diarrhea.
- Check the latest public pool, hot tub/spa, and water playground inspection scores online or onsite.
- Before getting in the water, do your own mini-inspection.
 - › Use a test strip from your local retailer or pool supply store to check if the water's pH and free chlorine or bromine level are correct:
 - » Follow the manufacturer's directions.
 - » pH: 7.2–7.8
 - » free chlorine: at least 3 ppm in hot tubs/spas and at least 1 ppm in pools and water playgrounds

- » bromine: at least 4 ppm in hot tubs/spas and at least 3 ppm in pools and water playgrounds
- › For additional inspection steps, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/materials/infographic-inspection.html>
- Rinse off in the shower before you get in the water. Rinsing off for just 1 minute removes most of the dirt or anything else on your body that could contaminate the water.
- Don't pee or poop in the water.

Order **FREE** printed Healthy Swimming brochures (in English and Spanish) at www.cdc.gov/pubs/CDCInfoOnDemand.aspx?ProgramID=93.

Drowning:

Each day, two children younger than 14 years old die from drowning. Drowning is a leading cause of death for children 1–4 years old.

For more info, visit

www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html.

Keep swimmers safe in the water.

- Make sure everyone knows how to swim.
- Use U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets as directed.
- Provide continuous, attentive supervision close to swimmers.
- Know CPR.

Prevent access to water when pool is not in use.

- Install and maintain barriers like 4-sided fencing.
- Use locks/alarms for windows and doors.

Harmful algal blooms:

Algae can grow in warm, nutrient-rich fresh- and marine water. An abundant growth of algae that harms people or animals is referred to as a harmful algal bloom (HAB). HABs in fresh- and marine water can produce toxins that cause a variety of symptoms including skin irritation, coughing, sneezing, diarrhea, stomach pain, numbness, and dizziness. Symptoms vary depending on the type of HAB toxin and the type of exposure, such as skin contact, ingestion by eating food or drinking water contaminated with HAB toxins, or breathing in tiny droplets or mist contaminated with HAB toxins.

For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/habs.

Avoid water that contains harmful algal blooms—when in doubt, stay out!

- Look for water body or beach advisories from local public health authorities or beach managers. If the beach is closed, stay out.
- Don't swim, water ski, or boat in areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water's surface.
- Avoid entering or swimming in bodies of water if you see dead fish or other dead animals in the water or on the beach.
- Keep children and pets from playing in or drinking scummy water.
- Get out and rinse off with clean water as soon as possible, if you swim in water where there might be a harmful algal bloom.
- Rinse off pets, especially dogs, immediately, if they swim in scummy water. Do not let them lick the algae off their fur.

***Naegleria fowleri* “the brain-eating amoeba”:**

Naegleria fowleri is a microscopic amoeba (a single-celled living organism) that is commonly found in warm freshwater such as in lakes, rivers, and hot springs. If water containing the amoeba goes up the nose forcefully, the amoeba can invade and cause a rare and devastating infection of the brain called primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM).

For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/parasites/naegleria.

***Naegleria fowleri* infections are rare.**

The only certain way to prevent an infection due to swimming is to stay out of freshwater. However, you can reduce your chance of getting an infection by limiting the amount of freshwater going up your nose. To limit the amount of freshwater going up your nose:

- Hold your nose or use nose clips when taking part in freshwater-related activities.
- Avoid putting your head underwater in hot springs and other bodies of warm freshwater.
- Avoid water-related activities in all bodies of warm freshwater, during periods of higher than normal water temperature.
- Avoid digging in or stirring up mud and scum while taking part in water-related activities in shallow, warm freshwater.

SAMPLE FEATURE

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

Have your eyes ever started to sting and turn red when you were swimming, playing, or relaxing 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. You're smelling a group of chemical compounds created when chlorine reacts with pee, poop, sweat, or dirt from swimmers. These chloramines irritate the eyes and respiratory tract, can aggravate asthma, and cause a strong chemical smell at indoor pools. These chloramines are different from the type of chloramine that is sometimes used to treat our drinking water.

Healthy swimming depends, in part, on what we as swimmers keep out of the treated water that we swim in this summer and year-round. We all share the water we swim in, and we each need to do our part to help keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy. In addition to being an all-American way to have fun with family and friends, swimming can be a great way to keep physically active. Just 2.5 hours of physical activity, including water-based physical activity, per week has health benefits for everyone. The health benefits for children are wide reaching. Studies have shown that children with asthma might have fewer symptoms when swimming regularly compared with other asthmatic children. Children also benefit socially from interacting with other children in pools. For pregnant women, water-based physical activity can help regulate body temperature, minimize stress on joints during exercise, and 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.

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, poop, sweat, or dirt not only creates 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 swimmers' bodies or when infected swimmers have diarrheal incidents in the water. Just one diarrheal incident can release enough *Cryptosporidium* (or "Crypto" for short) germs into the water that swallowing a mouthful can cause diarrhea for up to 3 weeks.

Even when the concentration of a pool disinfection chemical (chlorine or bromine) and the pH (which affects chlorine's and bromine's germ-killing power) are well maintained, germs aren't instantly killed. Crypto, the leading cause of disease outbreaks linked to pools, can survive in an adequately chlorinated pool for days. In 2000–2014, more than 200 outbreaks in the United States were caused by Crypto and linked to pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas. **<NOTE: Consider substituting national statistics with state/local statistics to increase state/local interest.>** This is a reminder that the water we swim, play, and relax in and share is not germ free and this is 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:

- Don't swim or let your kids swim if sick with 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.

These steps will help you protect yourself and loved ones while maximizing the health benefits of swimming. 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!



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

**RESOLUTION OF <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>
PROCLAIMING MAY 20–26, 2019 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 20–26, 2019, 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 swim, play, and relax in and share, and thus, maximize health benefits for all; and

WHEREAS, the week of May 20–26, 2019 has been set aside to raise public awareness of the importance of healthy and safe swimming and to reinforce education among those who operate and maintain pools, water playgrounds, or hot tubs/spas or manage beaches; 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 of the dedicated men and women who are trained to ensure health and safety standards are met at public pools, water playgrounds, hot tubs/spas, and beaches in this <State/County/City> and who have conducted over <INSERT COUNT> inspections of public pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas and conducted <INSERT COUNT> water quality tests at beaches; 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 2019 is “Pool Chemistry for Healthy & Safe Swimming” because as swimmers, parents, aquatics staff, residential pool or hot tub/spa owners, and public health officials, we each play a role in preventing illnesses and injury at the places we swim, play, and relax in and share; and

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF AGENCY/AGENCIES> provide(s) <INSERT LIST OF AGENCIES’ EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING, INCLUDING ANY TRAINING WORKSHOPS FOR POOL OPERATORS OR BEACH MANAGERS AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES>; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>, does hereby proclaim the week of May 20–26, 2019 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 swim, play, and relax in and share for the protection of our residents and visitors now and throughout the year.

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

SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Graphics to accompany social media messages are available at www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/materials/buttons-banners.html

AWARENESS WEEK – GENERAL

- It's Healthy and Safe Swimming Week! Learn how to stay healthy and safe in the water this summer and all year-round #HSSW2019 <https://go.usa.gov/xXqce>
- Don't let germs or injury interrupt fun in the water. Learn more during Healthy and Safe Swimming Week #HSSW2019 <https://go.usa.gov/xXqce>
- Educate yourself and family about the steps of healthy swimming during Healthy & Safe Swimming Week #HSSW2019 <https://go.usa.gov/xXqce>

POOL CHEMICAL SAFETY

- Stay safe around pool chemicals! Mishandling pool chemicals caused about 13,500 emergency department visits during 2015–2017; over 1/3 of patients were under the age of 18. #HSSW2019 <http://go.usa.gov/8j5T>
- A healthy pool has little or no chemical smell. A pool with strong chemical smell might have a lot of pee, poop, and sweat in it—it's not chlorine you smell! #HSSW2019 <http://go.usa.gov/8j5T>
- Pool chemicals protect us from germs, but they can also cause injuries if not handled safely. <http://go.usa.gov/8j5T>
- Don't pee in the pool! Pee in the pool mixes with chlorine, makes swimmers' eyes red, and uses up chlorine, leaving less to kill germs. <http://go.usa.gov/8j5T>
- Residential pool owners and public pool operators: read and follow directions on pool chemical labels to prevent injuries <http://go.usa.gov/8j5T>

NAEGLERIA FOWLERI (THE BRAIN-EATING AMEBA)

- Headed to the lake or river this summer? Learn tips to help prevent Naegleria fowleri (brain-eating ameba) infection go.usa.gov/xXqkM
- Infection with the “brain-eating ameba” is rare but almost always deadly. Learn more before swimming this summer go.usa.gov/xXqkM
- Help prevent Naegleria fowleri (brain eating ameba) infection. Limit water that goes up the nose when in lakes, ponds, and other natural water go.usa.gov/xXqkM

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

- Don't let harmful algae ruin your summer plans. Learn how to help spot and avoid harmful algal blooms. <http://go.usa.gov/xNsrf>
- Take care of yourself, your family, and your pets around the water by learning about harmful algal blooms. <http://go.usa.gov/xNsrf>
- Headed to the lake or beach? Learn tips to help you spot #HarmfulAlgalBlooms before swimming. <http://go.usa.gov/xNsrf>
- Swimming in water with harmful algal blooms can cause illness. Learn more before swimming this summer <https://go.usa.gov/xNsrf>

DROWNING

- Learn how to stay safe in the water and prevent drowning <https://go.usa.gov/xQKV9>
- CDC has tips to help you stay safe in the water. Learn more about how you can prevent drowning <https://go.usa.gov/xQKV9>
- Learn to swim! Formal swimming lessons in children as young as 1 year old can reduce the risk of drowning <https://go.usa.gov/xQKV9>
- Heading out on the boat? Wear a life jacket! Life jackets can reduce your risk of drowning <https://go.usa.gov/xQKV9>