

National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week
May 21 – 27, 2007

National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week is May 21-27. In recognition of this week, Multnomah County Environmental Health Services would like to take this opportunity to highlight healthy swimming behaviors which prevent the spread of recreational water-borne illness (RWIs).

Water-borne Illness Background

Outbreaks of recreational water illness continue to occur every year in the United States. Approximately 62% of these outbreaks are related to the chlorine-resistant pathogen, Cryptosporidium (“Crypto”) which can be introduced into a swimming pool by swimmers who are ill with diarrhea and then spread to other swimmers when they swallow contaminated water.

Who Can Be Affected by Water-borne Illness

All swimmers can get sick from Cryptosporidium and other water-borne diseases, including healthy individuals. Young children, elderly people, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems are especially at risk.

Healthy Swimming Behavior

To prevent the spread of RWI please practice the following healthy swimming behaviors:

- Don’t swim when you have any diarrhea or any intestinal illness
- Avoid getting pool water in your mouth or swallowing pool water
- Shower before swimming
- Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers
- Take children on regular bathroom breaks and change their diapers often
- Change children’s diapers in a bathroom, not at poolside.

For more information about healthy swimming and preventing recreational water-borne disease visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming.