



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Swimming Safely

Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week, May 19-25, 2014

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Karen Hunter] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Karen Hunter, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

In the summertime, families will be flocking to pools for relaxation and relief from the heat. A few simple precautions can help ensure a safe day in the water.

Michele Hlavsa is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss ways to stay safe at the pool. Welcome to the show, Michele.

[Michele Hlavsa] Thank you for having me.

[Karen Hunter] Michele, how common is drowning in the United States?

[Michele Hlavsa] Tragically, almost 4,000 people drown each year in the U.S.

[Karen Hunter] What can parents do to protect their children from drowning?

[Michele Hlavsa] Well, all of us, young and old, can learn how to swim. And parents' in particular can pay close attention to their children. They should be nearby while their children are swimming and be very attentive to their children while supervising them.

[Karen Hunter] What kinds of germs can be spread in a pool?

[Michele Hlavsa] The most common germs we see spreading in pools are those that cause diarrhea. Germs such as norovirus, *Cryptosporidium*, *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, and *Shigella*.

[Karen Hunter] Michele, how can parents make sure their pool is being properly treated for germs?

[Michele Hlavsa] Most germs are killed by chlorine or bromine within minutes, so it's really important to make sure we have the right disinfectant levels in the pools and the right pH to maximize germ killing power. Parents can get pool test strips at their local pool supply store or big box store and use those to test the water before they get in.

[Karen Hunter] What can people do to keep pool water clean?

[Michele Hlavsa] Well, everyone can take lots of steps. We can all shower before we get into the water. That's really important because that prevents stuff from getting into the water that can use up chlorine that would otherwise kill the germs. Another step is for everyone to take regular bathroom breaks. We recommend that parents of young children check diapers every 30 to 60 minutes and change them as needed, and take young children that are learning their toileting skills to the bathroom about every 60 minutes.

[Karen Hunter] Where can listeners get more information about pool safety?

[Michele Hlavsa] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/healthyswimming, one word.

[Karen Hunter] Thanks, Michele. I've been talking today with CDC's Michele Hlavsa about ways stay safe and healthy at the pool.

Along with close supervision, having basic swimming skills is important to prevent drowning. Just one person having diarrhea in the water can cause illness in other swimmers. Don't swallow pool water and don't swim when ill with diarrhea.

Until next time, be well. This is Karen Hunter for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.