



NEWS RELEASE

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Preventing Illness and Injury is Key to Summer Fun! **May 21-27, 2012 is Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week.**

Mesa County, CO--- The week before Memorial Day has been designated National Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week. RWII Prevention Week 2012 will take place May 21-27, 2012, marking the eighth anniversary of this observance.

Each year, RWII Prevention Week focuses on simple steps swimmers and pool operators can take to help ensure a healthy and safe swimming experience for everyone. The goal of this observance is to raise awareness about healthy and safe swimming behaviors, including ways to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and injuries. RWIs are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans. RWIs can also be caused by chemicals in the water or chemicals that evaporate from the water and cause indoor air quality problems.

Common RWIs include skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic, and wound infections. The most common RWI is diarrhea and is often caused by germs like Crypto (short for Cryptosporidium), Giardia, norovirus, Shigella, and E. coli.

Pseudomonas, another common waterborne bacteria causes hot tub rash, swimmer's ear, and numerous other infections in the immunocompromised population. Children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems are most at risk for RWIs.

"Pseudomonas testing for public and private pools and spas is offered through the Regional Lab," said Michelle Colon, Laboratory Supervisor for the Mesa County Health Department. "The testing is available year-round and is a low-cost way to help prevent RWIs such as swimmer's ear, hot tub rash and other infections caused by Pseudomonas contaminated pools and spas," added Colon.

Contrary to popular belief, chlorine does not kill all germs instantly. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are germs today that are very tolerant to chlorine and were not known to cause human disease until recently. Once these germs get in the pool, it can take anywhere from minutes to days for chlorine to kill them. Swallowing just a small amount of water that contains these germs can make someone sick.

For more information about healthy swimming please visit CDC's Healthy Swimming website at www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming. For more information on Pseudomonas testing please call Michelle Colon at 248-6999 or visit www.health.mesacounty.us/lab.

Mesa County Health Department—“Working Together for a Healthy Community.”