



MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Health Department Reminds Residents to Swim Safely**

(Mason City) – With local pools opening for their summer seasons, the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health would like to remind residents to take precautions and swim safely.

Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs) are caused by germs found in places where we swim including pools, spas, lakes, and streams. Some of these germs occur naturally, but humans are often the cause of RWIs. Even in a properly chlorinated pool, some germs can last hours or days.

“The Department of Public Health’s role is to provide inspection services to pools and assess health and safety concerns as well as to provide information to the general public,” says Dan Ries, Senior Environmental Health Specialist with the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. “However, the public and pool operators have an important role to play in the prevention of recreational water illnesses.”

To help protect yourself and other swimmers from germs, there are simple and effective steps all swimmers can take each time they swim:

- Don’t swim when you have diarrhea. Keep children with diarrhea out of the water.
- Shower before you start swimming.
- Take bathroom breaks every hour.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Don’t change diapers poolside or around swimming areas, use the restroom.
- Avoid swallowing pool water or even getting it in your mouth.

In addition, Recreational Water Injuries are also of concern. The CDC states that drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury death among children aged 1-4 years. Adults are encouraged to supervise their child while in or around water, and enroll the child into local swimming lesson courses.

Deputy Director of the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, Brian Hanft says, “I can’t stress enough the importance of this information. Most people may think ‘it can’t happen to me’, but it has and it can. We do not want recent outbreak history to repeat itself. Please adhere to these easy and simple steps.”

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Web site: [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com) • Twitter page: <http://twitter.com/CGPublicHealth>

For more information regarding Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention, please visit our website at [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com) or call Dan at 641-421-9338.

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