



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# *Board of Health* *Sidney-Shelby County*

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week — May 20–26, 2013**

Summer is fast approaching and swimming pools are preparing to open here in Shelby County. May 20–26, 2013, marks the ninth annual Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week. This observance highlights easy and effective steps swimmers can take to reduce health and safety risks at swimming pools, hot tubs/spas, and other recreational water venues.

Recreational water illnesses (RWI) are illnesses caused by germs in the water we swim and play in. A person can become ill by swallowing, inhaling aerosols, or contacting with contaminated water from pools, hot tubs/spas, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans. Chemicals in the water or air can also cause indoor air quality problems. A 2012 study done in Atlanta, Georgia showed that 59% of the pool filters tested contained disease causing bacteria and parasites.

Swimmers need to practice good swimmer hygiene by taking a pre-swim shower with soap and not swimming when ill with diarrhea. Wash hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Take kids on bathroom breaks and check diapers often. Change diapers in a diaper changing area, not poolside. These practices help to protect all swimmers from contacting disease causing germs in recreational water venues. And remember, don't swallow or put the water in your mouth! Additional information on healthy swimming is available at <http://www.shelbycountyhealthdept.org/swimming.html>.

Injuries and drowning can occur in and around recreational water, too. The Center for Disease Control states, drowning is the leading cause of injury death among children aged 1–4 years. On average, 10 persons die from drowning each day, including two aged less than 15 years. Keep an eye on kids at all times. Use appropriately fitted life jackets for each person when boating. And don't forget the sunscreen! Use at least SPF 15 and reapply after swimming.

Sidney-Shelby County Health Department (SSCHD) has a role in preventing RWIs. In the United States, all pool codes are independently written and enforced by state and/or local agencies. SSCHD sanitarians inspect all public pools and spas regularly to insure the water is safe to swim in and the pool and spa areas are safe to use and comply with state rules. Seasonal outdoor pools are checked monthly.

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