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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Keep Germs Out of the Water!  
Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week  
May 20-26, 2013**

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department wants to remind everyone as we approach the Memorial Day Weekend to take special care when swimming in recreational water. Many outdoor pools and beaches will be filling up with people looking to have fun; KCHD wants to make sure health and safety are a top priority. This is National Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week.

Every year, thousands of cases of illness are reported in the U.S., transmitted by germs in recreational waters. Many of these illnesses are caused by improper hygiene or eliminating human waste in water. Protect yourself and others with these tips:

- Shower with soap before swimming, and take a rinse shower before getting back in the water.
- Take younger kids on regular bathroom breaks, and check diapers every 30–60 minutes.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Change diapers in the bathroom or diaper-changing area and not at poolside where germs can rinse into the water.
- Don't swallow the water you swim in.
- Check for water hazards before heading to the beach (i.e. red flag warnings, e coli levels) to make sure you know about any potential dangers.

Pool owners or operators should make sure they are following proper guidelines for safe, clean pool water as well. Be sure to check chlorine and pH levels, especially before allowing people to get into the water.

It takes a matter of seconds for a child to drown, even in shallow water. Always supervise children when near water, even when they are wearing personal floatation devices. If you see someone struggling in the water, immediately throw them a personal floatation device, and if necessary, call 911. Someone struggling may not be able to yell for help; look for warning signs, such as waving an arm in the air, swimming but not progressing towards the shore, or someone grabbing at other swimmers for help.

For more information, check out <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/>.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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