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DOH-PINELLAS RECOGNIZES HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING WEEK

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The unofficial summer season begins Memorial Day weekend and the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) is reminding residents and visitors to enjoy pools and water fun with care during Healthy and Safe Swimming Week, May 19-23.

“Swimming in a pool is a great way to exercise and have fun,” said Dr. Ulyee Choe, director of DOH-Pinellas. “It’s also essential that swimmers and water watchers be safe while at the pool.”

Pool season is also a time when the number of child drownings and near-drownings increases. In Pinellas, Florida Safe Pools provides information on making your home pool safer for children. Go to <http://flsafepools.com> for videos, resources and more information.

To make water fun safe, it’s important to learn to swim—no matter how old you are. From babies to seniors, anyone can enjoy a safe outing in water with basic swim and safety skills. Swimming is a cool way to stay fit and the safety skills learned during swim lessons can help you do it the right way. Information about low or no cost swimming lessons from the YMCA is available at <https://www.ymcasuncoast.org/swimming>

Throughout the state, Waterproof Florida (<http://www.waterprooffl.com>) encourages layers of protection that include:

- **Layer 1: Supervision:** Supervision, the first and most crucial layer of protection, means someone is always actively watching when a child is in the pool.
- **Layer 2: Barriers:** A child should never be able to enter the pool area unaccompanied by a guardian. Barriers physically block a child from the pool.
- **Layer 3: Emergency Preparedness:** The moment a child stops breathing there is a small, precious window of time in which resuscitation may occur, but only if someone knows what to do. Learn CPR. The techniques are easy to learn and can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, it is critical to have a phone nearby and immediately call 911 should an emergency arise.

DOH-Pinellas Public Swimming Pools Program staff inspects approximately 2700 public (any facility used by the public or shared by five or more living units) swimming pools in Pinellas County twice each year. Water is checked to ensure the correct chemistry is maintained to prevent contamination and the spread of waterborne diseases.

Another important part of the inspection is to ensure that the required safety equipment is provided and accessible if needed. This includes a life ring and shepherd's hook, as well as pool and spa drain safety requirements. The filter equipment is examined for correct operation and compliance to ensure healthy and safe water. Inspection records are available at <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-health/inspections/view-inspections/index.html>

For more information about the programs and services offered by DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com.

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