

Public Health, Epidemiology and Prevention

PEP Talk

Pinellas County Health Department • May 2008

It's Your Time: Get Inspired. Get Healthy

National Women's Health Week is May 11-17

The ninth annual **National Women's Health Week** begins on Mother's Day, May 11, 2008 and empowers women across the country to get healthy by taking action. This project encourages women to make their health a top priority and take simple steps for a longer, healthier and happier life.



National Women's Check-Up Day takes place on Monday, May 12. It is a nationwide effort to:

- Encourage women to visit health care professionals to receive or schedule a check-up.

Women can take steps to improve their physical and mental health and prevent disease, such as:

- Engaging in physical activity most days of the week
- Making healthy food choices
- Visiting a healthcare provider to receive regular check-ups and



preventive screenings

- Avoiding risky behaviors, such as smoking and not wearing a seatbelt

Why Celebrate National Women's Health Week?

It is important to remind women that taking care of themselves is essential to living longer, healthier and happier lives. Women are often the caregivers for their spouses, children and parents and forget to focus on their own health. But research shows that when women take care of themselves, the health of their families improves, too!



During National Women's Health Week, we need to educate our wives, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, aunts and girlfriends about steps they can take to improve their health and prevent disease.

After all, when women take even the simplest steps to improve their health, the results can be significant and everyone will benefit!

- Promote regular check-ups as vital to early detection of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, mental health illnesses, sexually transmitted diseases and other conditions.

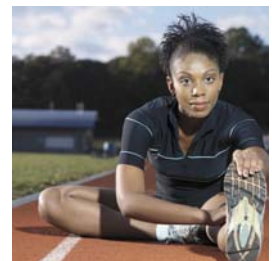
- Encourage screening tests, such as mammograms and Pap tests, They can find diseases early, when they are easier to treat. Some women need certain screening tests earlier, or more often, than others do.

Many of the leading causes of death among women can be successfully prevented or treated if the warning signs are caught early enough.

How can women participate in this important event?

You can participate in National Women's Check-Up Day in several ways:

- Contact your health care provider to schedule check-ups and screening services on National Women's Check-Up Day.
- During your check-ups, discuss with which tests are right for you, when you should have them and how often.



For more information about women's health or National Women's Health Week, please visit www.womenshealth.gov or call (800)-994-9662 (TTY: (888) 220-5446).

Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week is May 19-25

Make a splash without getting sick this summer



Swimming is a fun, active and healthy way to spend leisure time. Make sure you stay safe and healthy this summer by practicing healthy swimming habits.



of time in salt water. Swimmers should always avoid swallowing the water that they and others swim in.

Healthy swimming behaviors can prevent the spread of Recreational Water Illnesses. These behaviors will stop germs from getting in the water in the first place.

The week leading up to Memorial Day has been designated as **National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week**. The fourth annual observance takes place May 19-25, 2008.

You share the water with everyone else. If someone with diarrhea contaminates the water and you swallow, breathe in or come into contact with that water, then you may get sick. These illnesses are called **Recreational Water Illnesses, or RWI's**.

Recreational water can also be contaminated by fecal matter rinsed off of the bodies of swimmers. When people are ill with diarrhea their stool can contain millions of germs. Therefore, if you go swimming when ill with diarrhea, you can easily contaminate the water.



This is especially true in public pools, hot tubs and at water parks. You might think that chlorine will kill these germs. It does – but not right away. In fact, without your help, even the best-maintained pools can spread

illness.

Diarrheal accidents are not easily noticed and as a result could contaminate even the best-maintained pool. Plus, some germs like Crypto (short for Cryptosporidium) are resistant to chlorine and can live in even the best-maintained pools for several days.

These RWIs have been linked to swimming.

- ◆ Diarrheal illness
- ◆ Skin rashes
- ◆ Ear infections
- ◆ Eye infections
- ◆ Respiratory infections

RWIs have been also associated with swimming at ocean beaches. Some common germs can live for long periods



Practice these **Three PLEAs** to stop germs from causing illness at the pool, around fountains, lakes and water parks:

1. Please don't swim when you have diarrhea...this is especially important for children in diapers. You (or your children) can spread germs into the water and make other people sick.

2. Please don't swallow the water. In fact, try your best to avoid even having water get in your mouth.

3. Please wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet or after changing diapers. You can protect others by realizing that germs on your body end up in the water.

Three PLEAs for Parents with Young Children

Follow these **PLEAs** to protect your children and others from getting sick and to help keep RWIs out of your community:

1. Please take your kids on bathroom breaks often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.

2. Please change children's diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and spread disease.

3. Please wash your child thoroughly (especially their rear ends) with soap and water before swimming. We all have invisible amounts of fecal matter on our bottoms that could end up in the pool.

For more information about Healthy Swimming or preventing Recreational Water Illness, contact your local county health department or visit www/cdc.gov/healthyswimming

