



# Maricopa County

## News Release

### Environmental Services Department

1001 N. Central Avenue  
Suite 200

Phoenix, AZ 85004

Phone: 602-506-6611

TDD: 602-372-0622

Fax: 602-506-1874

[www.maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc)

For additional information: Johnny Diloné, Public Information Officer  
Cell: 602-525-2423  
Kishonna L Gray, Public Information Assistant  
Cell: 602-525-4348

July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008

## Swimming Safety: Protect Your Family from Water Borne Illnesses

Swimming is a fun activity we all enjoy especially during these hot summer months. But with the possibility of Recreational Water Illness (RWI) associated with pools, water parks, and hot tubs, please remember to follow the proper safety precautions to remain safe.

RWIs are caused by parasites such as “Crypto” (*Cryptosporidium*) and are spread by swallowing water that has been contaminated with fecal matter. If someone with diarrhea contaminates the water, swallowing the water can make you sick. Most pathogenic organisms are killed by normal disinfection (chlorination or bromination). However, chlorine doesn’t work right away on all organisms. It takes time to kill parasites like “Crypto” are resistant to chlorine and can live in pools for days before it’s eliminated. That is why even the best maintained pools can spread illness.

“Maricopa County Environmental Services inspectors routinely monitor proper disinfection and safety issues in our County’s public and semi-public pools. But it is important that the entire community assists and plays a role in risk reduction as well,” says David Ludwig Environmental Health Division Manager with the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department.

So what do you need to do to protect yourself from RWI’s and stop germs from getting in the pool? Follow these safety tips from the Healthy Swimming initiative by the CDC:

- Don’t swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for kids in diapers. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- Don’t swallow the pool water. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
- Take your kids on bathroom breaks and change diapers often. Waiting to hear “I have to go” may mean that it’s too late.
- Change diapers in a bathroom and not near the pool. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and spread illness.
- Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. Everyone has invisible amounts of fecal matter on their bottoms that can get in the pool.

“If you are unsure about any of the safety tips while you or a family member has diarrhea, then please avoid the pool,” says David Ludwig.

For more information on Recreational Water safety, contact Maricopa County Environmental Services Department at (602) 506-6616 or visit [www.maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc).