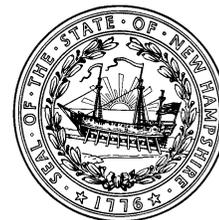


NH Department of Health and Human Services  
129 Pleasant Street – Hugh Gallen State Office Park  
Concord, NH 03301



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT**  
**Public Information Office**  
**603-271-6526**  
**Twitter: NHDHHSPIO**  
**Facebook: NHDepartmentOfHealthAndHumanServices**

## **Enjoy the Water and Stay Healthy**

*DHHS Recognizes Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week*

**Concord, NH** – This week is Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week. The goal of this observance is to raise awareness about healthy and safe swimming behaviors, including ways to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and injuries. DHHS is encouraging New Hampshire residents and guests to enjoy all New Hampshire has to offer but to do so safely.

RWIs are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans. RWIs can also be caused by chemicals in the water or chemicals that evaporate from the water and cause indoor air quality problems.

The theme of this year's RWII Prevention Week is preventing swimmer's ear, also known as otitis externa. Swimmer's ear is an infection of the outer ear canal that can cause pain and discomfort for swimmers of all ages. It affects millions of Americans every year and results in hundreds of millions of dollars in hospitalization costs. The good news is that swimmer's ear is preventable. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following steps:

- Keep your ears as dry as possible; use a bathing cap, ear plugs, or custom-fitted swim molds when swimming.
- Dry your ears thoroughly after swimming or showering
  - Use a towel to dry your ears well
  - Tilt your head and hold each ear facing down to allow water to escape the ear canal
  - Pull your earlobe in different directions while the ear is faced down to help water drain out

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- Do not put objects into the ear canal (such as swabs, pencils, paper clips, or fingers)
- Do not try to remove ear wax, which helps protect the ear canal from infection
- If you think that the ear canal is blocked by ear wax consult your healthcare provider
- Consult your healthcare provider about using ear drops after swimming. Ear drops should not be used by people with ear tubes, damaged ear drums, outer ear infections, or ear drainage (pus or liquid coming from the ear).

For more information about recreational water illness prevention, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/rwi-prevent.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/rwi-prevent.html). For more information about drowning prevention, visit [www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Drowning/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Drowning/index.html). For more information about healthy swimming, visit [www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming).

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