



May 2013
Volume 3, Issue 1

New Social Media Sites Launched for DEHS

The Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) is always looking for ways to increase communication and health education outreach to the community, and social media is an important tool in reaching San Bernardino County residents, visitors, and operators. We have launched several new social media sites over the past few months. Our English-language Pinterest site is <http://pinterest.com/sbehs> and our Spanish-language site is <http://pinterest.com/sbehsepsp>. We will be "pinning" to boards on pool safety and drowning prevention, as well as mosquito and vector control, food safety and foodborne illness prevention, and more.



We have also created two YouTube channels. The link for our English-language channel is www.youtube.com/user/sbcdehs and the link for our Spanish-language channel is www.youtube.com/user/sbcdehsepsp. Check out our playlists called "Drowning Prevention/Pool Safety Videos" and "Videos de Piscina Segura."

DEHS is now on Instagram. Our username is sbehs. We'll be posting photos on drowning prevention and pool safety, as well as other environmental health topics. Please follow us on Instagram!

Communicable Disease Profiles Webpage

We recently launched a [Communicable Disease Profiles page!](#) Starting in 2013, the Division of Environmental Health Services will be profiling a different communicable disease each month. Our goal is to raise awareness about the prevention of waterborne, foodborne, and vector-borne diseases. Check back each month for more information!



May is National Water Safety Month

Because of the popularity of swimming and water-related recreational activities in the United States, and the resulting need for ongoing public health education on safer water practices, May 2013 is recognized as National Water Safety Month. DEHS uses this annual observance month to raise awareness about healthy and safe recreational water practices.

In San Bernardino County, National Water Safety Month is being celebrated through educational programs, public service announcements via social media outreach, and the distribution of water safety-themed materials. DEHS distributed free drowning prevention materials to approximately 1,700 children and their parents at the 28th Annual



Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week is May 20-26, 2013

The week before Memorial Day (May 20-26, 2013) is Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week. DEHS uses this annual observance week to raise awareness about healthy and safe swimming, and to highlight ways to prevent recreational water illnesses and injuries.



Every year, thousands of Americans get sick with recreational water illnesses (RWIs), which are caused by germs found in places where we swim. Every day, two children under the age of 14 years die from drowning; it is the leading cause of death for children 1-4 years old. Healthy and safe swimming means preventing the spread of the germs that cause RWIs and keeping children safe from drowning.

Drowning is preventable, although each year thousands die and more are left with long-term consequences including memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning (e.g., permanent vegetative state). To reduce the risk of drowning, San Bernardino County residents should:

- Prepare by making sure that:
 - Everyone knows how to swim
 - Older children and adults know CPR and rescue breathing
- When in the water, keep swimmers safe by:
 - Using life jackets that fit properly for younger or weaker swimmers
 - Providing continuous, attentive supervision close to the swimmers even if there is a lifeguard
 - Avoiding alcohol and drugs when swimming or watching swimmers
- When NOT in the water, prevent access to the water by:
 - Installing and maintaining barriers (for pools: 4-sided fencing and weight-bearing covers)
 - Using locks or alarms for windows and doors

RWIs are also preventable, but prevention requires swimmers to take an active role in protecting themselves and other swimmers. Research shows that health education campaigns are an effective way to increase swimmer awareness and encourage healthy swimming behaviors. Simple steps swimmers can take to help prevent the spread of germs that cause RWIs include:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make others sick.
- Don't swallow pool water. Avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
- Parents of young children should remember to:
 - Wash their children before swimming (especially their rear ends).
 - Check diapers every 30-60 minutes. Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside. Germs can spread in and around the pool.
 - Take your kids to the bathroom every 30-60 minutes. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website has valuable information on drowning prevention (www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/index.html) and healthy swimming (www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/).

Article reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Amanda Gaspard, Health Education Specialist, at 800-442-2283 or Amanda.Gaspard@dph.sbcounty.gov.

**We appreciate the effort you make to
protect the public's health in our County.**

