

# Six Steps of Healthy Swimming: Protection Against Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs)

You Can Choose to Swim Healthy!

Healthy Swimming behaviors will help protect you and your kids from RWIs and help stop germs from getting in the pool in the first place.

Here are six steps that promote Healthy Swimming:

## Three Steps for All Swimmers

Keep germs from causing illnesses (RWIs) at the pool:

- **Please** don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- **Please** don't swallow the pool water. Avoid getting water in your mouth.
- **Please** 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.

## Three Steps for Parents of Young Kids

Keep germs out of the pool:

- **Please** take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.
- **Please** change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside. Germs can spread in and around the pool.
- **Please** wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. Invisible amounts of fecal matter can end up in the pool.

## Boating Safety

- It is estimated that 423 lives could have been saved in 2006 if all boaters had worn life jackets.
- Alcohol involvement was the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents, contributing to about one in five reported boating deaths.
- Open motor boats were involved in 45% of all reported incidents and personal watercraft were involved in another 24%.
- There was an increase in 2006 in the number of reported fatalities associated with the use of canoes/kayaks. The number of deaths associated with these types of crafts increased from 78 in 2005 to 99 in 2006.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security (US). Boating Statistics – 2006 [online]. 2008. [cited 2008 March 26]. Available from URL:

[http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/Boating\\_Statistics\\_2006.pdf](http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/Boating_Statistics_2006.pdf).

## Tips for Preventing Boat Injuries and Deaths

### **Wear Your Life Jacket While Boating**

Life jacket use by all boat occupants can reduce drownings. Coast Guard-approved life jackets are

now more attractive in appearance and comfortable to wear. When properly fitted, a life jacket or PFD can help to prevent a tragedy.

### **Avoid Alcoholic Beverages While Boating**

Alcohol use affects judgment, vision, balance, and coordination. Reports suggest that alcohol was a contributing factor in about one in five boating fatalities.

### **Complete a Boating Education Course**

Most reported incidents in 2006 involved operator-controllable factors. The primary causes of incidents were carelessness or recklessness, operator inattention, operator inexperience, and unsafe speeds.

Boating education courses teach the regulatory and statutory rules (“Rules of the Road”) for the safe operation and navigation of recreational boats. In 2006, 70% of all boating fatalities occurred on boats where the boat operator had not attended a boating safety education course.

### **Participate in the Vessel Safety Check (VSC) Program**

The Vessel Safety Check (VSC) is a free public service provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadron volunteer organizations promoting boating safety. These volunteer personnel check safety equipment and provide information about equipment purpose, safety procedures and applicable regulations. For more information on the VSC Program, visit their web site: [www.vesselsafetycheck.org](http://www.vesselsafetycheck.org). \*

### **Be Aware of the Risk of [Carbon Monoxide \(CO\) Poisoning](#)**

All internal combustion engines emit CO, an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas. In the early stages, the symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to seasickness and CO can kill in a matter of minutes. There is potential for CO poisoning during the use of air conditioning powered by an onboard motor generator; the operation of any gasoline-powered engine while docked and/or rafted with other boats operating engines; swimming or floating near an idling boat engine; or running your boat, or being underway with improper cabin ventilation. To avoid CO poisoning, be aware of the risk, ensure sufficient ventilation, properly install and maintain equipment, and use CO detectors, especially in living and sleeping areas.

Be sure to check state and local requirements, available from the [National Association of State Boating Law Administrators website](#), before boating. There are different rules and regulations for operator-age, safety equipment, etc. in different parts of the country.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security (US). Boating Statistics – 2006 [online]. 2008. [cited 2008 March 26]. Available from URL: [http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/Boating\\_Statistics\\_2006.pdf](http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/Boating_Statistics_2006.pdf)