

NEWS RELEASE

May 19th, 2015

**MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
415 NORTH 6TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584**

TO: KMAS, KRXV, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: National Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2015

Mason County, WA – Mason County is an expert in water. With nearly 100 lakes, hundreds of miles of shoreline, and local industry supported by oyster and seafood production, the community is right at home in this natural environment.

The week before Memorial Day is designated as National Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. Formerly known as Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week, this will be the 11th year that the nation comes together to learn simple ways that swimmers and pool operators can help ensure a healthy and safe swimming experience for everyone.

2015 Theme: Make a Healthy Splash: Share the Fun, not the Germs

May 18th-24th, 2015 is a chance to celebrate Mason County's natural landscape and learn about the role that swimmers, beach staff, pool owners and public health officials all have in helping to prevent drowning, pool chemical injuries and outbreaks of recreational water illnesses. As a swimmer, there are easy ways that we can actively help keep ourselves safe, protect other swimmers, and reduce the risk of drowning:

- Prepare by making sure that:
 - Everyone knows how to swim
 - Older children and adults know CPR
- When in the water, keep swimmers safe by:
 - Using properly fitted life jackets for younger or weaker swimmers
 - Providing continuous supervision close to the swimmers
 - Avoiding alcohol and other drugs when swimming or supervising swimmers
- When NOT in the water, prevent access to the water by:
 - Installing and maintaining barriers (for pools: fencing and weight-bearing covers)
 - Using locks or alarms for windows and doors

Recreation water illnesses (RWIs) are caused by germs spread by having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, lakes and oceans. RWIs can also be caused by chemicals in the water or chemicals that evaporate from the water, causing indoor air quality problems. The most common RWI is diarrhea, and can be caused by germs like Giardia, norovirus and E. coli. As a swimmer, there are also easy ways that we can help reduce the spread of germs and RWIs:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make others sick.

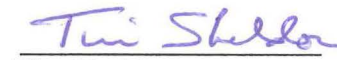
- Don't swallow pool water and avoid getting water (from pools or natural sources) in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
- Parents of young children should remember to:
 - Wash their children before swimming.
 - Check diapers every 30–60 minutes and change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area instead of by the water.
 - Take kids to the bathroom every 30–60 minutes.

With warm weather coming quickly, Healthy and Safe Swimming Week is a chance to learn how we can all do our part to ensure our community has a safe, healthy and fun summer. By keeping these tips in mind, we can all be sure to enjoy some of the best summer activities that Mason County has to offer.

For more information about healthy swimming, visit the Center for Disease Control's Healthy Swimming website at www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming. For more information on recreational water quality and safety in Mason County, contact Mason County Public Health & Human Services at (360) 427-9670 ext 400, 360-275-4467 from Belfair, or 360-482-5269 from Elma.


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