

For Immediate Release

June 10, 2021

Summer Water Temperatures Increase the Risk of Deadly Infection to Children

Wichita Falls, Texas – With regional lakes being full this summer, water recreation will be on the minds of everyone. Therefore, the City of Wichita Falls Public Works Department and the Wichita Falls - Wichita County Public Health District are once again teaming up to caution citizens who will be swimming in area lakes and rivers during the warm summer months about the possible presence of *Naegleria fowleri*, and how to protect their children from the highly preventable waterborne disease.

Naegleria fowleri is found in all natural bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, ponds, tanks and streams. During the warm summer months of June, July and August, the amoeba can infect children by being forcibly injected into their sinus cavity during recreational activities. Once in the sinus, the amoeba can cause the fatal disease Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM). While contact with the amoeba in natural bodies of water is common, infection is rare due primarily to the only route of infection being through the nose.

Two key precautions that citizens can take to help protect their children include:

- **Never play or swim in warm, muddy, stagnant waters.**
- **Teach children to hold their nose or use nose clips when playing in any natural water body. Especially when the type of recreation can force water into the nose, such as skiing, jet skiing, jumping or diving.**

If your child starts to experience any of the following symptoms within a couple of days of playing or swimming in a natural body of water, contact your health care provider immediately:

- Headache
- Fever
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Stiff neck
- Loss of balance
- Disorientation
- Hallucinations, or
- Seizures.

The amoeba does not live in swimming pools and hot tubs that are properly cleaned, maintained and treated with Chlorine and Filtration. Remember, this disease is very rare and the use of smart prevention strategies can allow for a safe and relaxing summer swim season.

For more information on *Naegleria fowleri* and Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis, visit the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/naegleria/index.html> or, contact the Wichita Falls - Wichita County Public Health District at 761-7805 or, the Cypress Water Treatment Plant at 691-1153.

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