

**For Immediate Release**

**May 23, 2023**

## **City Warns of Deadly Water Infection**

Wichita Falls, Texas- 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 this summer from a 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 cavities 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 is through the nose.

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

- Never swim or play in warm, muddy, stagnant waters.
- Teach children to hold their noses or use nose clips when 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 recreating in a natural body of water, contact your healthcare provider immediately:

- Headache
- Fever
- Nausea and/or Vomiting

Later symptoms can include;

- Stiff neck
- Confusion
- Loss of balance
- Disorientation
- Hallucinations
- Seizures

The amoeba does not live in swimming pools and hot tubs that are properly cleaned, maintained, and treated with chlorine and filtration.

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:

CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/naegleria/index.html>

Texas Health and Human Services website at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/primary-amebic-meningoencephalitis-pam>

For more information contact the Wichita Falls - Wichita County Public Health District at (940) 761-7805, or the Cypress Water Treatment Plant at (940) 691-1153.

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