

NATIONAL Water Safety MONTH



MAY IS NATIONAL WATER SAFETY MONTH

National Water Safety Month is designed to highlight water awareness and swim safety. Organizations including the National Recreation & Park Association, Pool & Hot Tub Alliance, American Red Cross, and National Drowning Prevention Alliance contribute to the efforts to promote educational programs, public health initiatives, and easy-to-access water safety materials.



Benefits of Water

Water can boost physical health! Swimming is a full-body workout which builds cardiovascular fitness, endurance, and strength.

Regular swimming can reduce stress, improve mood, boost optimism, and enable better sleep. New York state is fifth in the country for having the most in-ground pool installations.

Importance of Water Safety

Spending time in the water this summer comes with its own hazards that can easily be avoided.

Learning how to swim and practicing safe swimming can help prevent drowning.

Awareness of bacteria such as E. coli and keeping up-to-date on local health updates can help prevent water-related illness.

Keeping up to date on pool cleanliness and maintenance, as well as healthy habits prior to swimming can help reduce exposure to harmful bacteria in the water.



Beaches

Public Beaches in Erie County

- Woodlawn Beach State Park
- Hamburg Beach
- Bennett Beach
- Evans Town Park Beach
- Lake Erie Beach

Swimming at Beaches

- regulated beaches are monitored for safety & health
- swimming outside of regulated beaches poses a risk for swimming in contaminated water
- open waters have currents, rocks, and slippery surfaces which may be unfamiliar and hazardous to swimmers
- clean up after pets and properly dispose of waste
- do not feed waterfowl at beaches

Beach Closings

- Beaches can be closed for reasons including: dangerous swimming conditions, no lifeguards present, high levels of *E. coli* bacteria
- National Weather Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and USGS provide data for beach closings
- New York State Sanitary Code limit for *E. coli* is 235 colony forming units per 100 mL - *E. coli* has dangerous strains that can cause diarrhea and vomiting, as well as other serious illness

Pools & Hot Tubs

Pool Health & Safety

- Stay out of pools if you are sick with diarrhea
- Shower prior to entering the pool or hot tub
- Do not go poo or pee in swimming pools
- Do not swallow water

Pools & Spas at Home

- Always ensure children are supervised when in or around the pool
- Learning to swim and teaching children how to swim
- Knowing where drains are located and teaching children to stay away from drains
- Ensuring compliance of pool specifications and drain covers
- Installation of safety devices such as barriers, covers, and alarms
- Get certified in CPR
- Learn about pool safety from appropriate sources

Swimming-Related Illnesses

- *Cryptosporidium* - parasite causing gastrointestinal illness
- *Legionella* - bacteria causing pneumonia
- Norovirus - virus causing gastrointestinal illness
- *Escherichia coli (E. coli)* - bacteria causing gastrointestinal illness
- *Giardia* - parasite causing gastrointestinal illness
- nontuberculous mycobacteria - bacteria causing respiratory illness

Swim Safety

Drowning Prevention

- Adult supervision of children in the pool - without distractions
- Layers of protection including barriers, self-latching doors, alarms, safety covers
- Remove pool toys from the pool when not in use to avoid children being attracted to the area when not supervised
- Teaching children to swim at a young age - years 3-5 are an ideal age to enroll children in swimming lessons

Water Emergency

- Call 9-1-1 in case of drowning or other emergency
- CPR saves lives - trainings are available at various facilities as well as online
- alert the lifeguard if one is present
- Recognize the signs of someone in trouble in the water: not making forward progress, vertical in the water but unable to move, motionless & face down in the water

Diving

- Know the depth of the water before diving
- “Always steer up” with your hands when diving
- Practice carefully before you dive
- Do not dive into aboveground pools
- Serious spinal injury can occur even at slow speeds if the head strikes firmly against the pool bottom or side

Additional Resources

New York State Department of Health

Erie County Beaches and Pools

PoolSafely.gov

CDC - Healthy Swimming

Pool & Hot Tub Alliance

World Waterpark Association

American Red Cross