



DOH-Monroe Promotes Water Safety Month

(Monroe County, Fla) – The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County (DOH-Monroe) encourages communities to participate in National Water Safety Month in May. Take precautions to prevent drownings.

With pools, lakes, and other surrounding bodies of water in Florida, water safety is critical to prevent drownings. Children ages 1-4 years are more likely to drown in a home swimming pool than children ages 5-19 years, who are more likely to drown in natural bodies of water. Whether you are a parent or a community group member, everyone plays a role in drowning prevention. The goal is to keep water activities fun and safe for all as we move into the summer months.

Tips on Water Safety:

- Always keep your eyes on children in and around water, including pools and open bodies of water. Actively supervising and giving children your undivided attention when they are in or around water can help prevent drownings.
 - **Never** leave a child alone around water.
 - If your child is missing, check other pools or surrounding bodies of water.
 - Use barriers around water, including fences, self-closing/self-latching gates, and secure doors with alarms. Barriers help prevent young children from wandering into bodies of water, including lakes, pools, ponds, and more.
- Have a phone nearby in case you need to call 911 in an emergency.

Beach and Lake Swimming:

Swimming in open water is different than swimming in a pool. Even the strongest swimmer can get into trouble swimming in open water. Here are some tips for swimming at the beach or lake:

- **Swim It:** Always swim with a buddy, and when safety flags and signs give it the all-clear to do so.
- **Shore It:** If you have a weakened immune system, a cut on your skin, or don't have a buddy to swim with, stay on dry land.
- **Dodge It:** If you encounter animals that live near or in the water, stay away. Also, algal blooms like red tide and blue-green algae, which cause skin irritation, burning eyes and throat, and breathing irritations. For current information on red tide or blue-green algae, please visit <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/>.

For more information on water safety, visit <https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/drowning-prevention/index.html>. For more information or questions, please contact DOH- Monroe at dohmonroe@floridahealth.gov.