

July 27th 2023

DOH-ST. JOHNS REMINDS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO STAY SAFE IN AND AROUND THE WATER

St. Augustine, Fla. – As the outdoor temperature increases and individuals look for ways to cool off the Florida Department of Health in St. Johns County (DOH-St. Johns) wants to remind residents and visitors in to use precautions to stay safe while enjoying recreational water activities.



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, especially throughout the summer.

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.
- Have a phone nearby in case you need to call 911 in an emergency.

Beach 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:

- Stay alert to and obey the current safety flags:
 - Double Red Flag: Very high hazard and water is closed to the public.
 - Single Red Flag: High hazard with high surf and strong currents.
 - Single Yellow Flag: Medium hazard with moderate surf and/or strong currents.
 - Single Green Flag: Low hazard with calm conditions, but caution still advised.
 - Single Purple Flag: Dangerous marine life.
- Stay alert to rip tides and strong currents. If you get caught in a rip tide or strong current, don't fight it. Swim parallel to the shore until you have passed through it. Learn to recognize and watch for dangerous waves and signs of rip tides – darker, narrow gaps of water heading offshore between areas of breaking waves and whitewater.
- Don't swim alone. Even if you are a good swimmer, you never know when you might need help.

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-St. Johns at (904) 506-6081.

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