



EnviroTrack

Tracking the Environment and Public Health in Your Community

Summer 2025

RECREATIONAL WATER ILLNESS

Summer is here, and for many people that means trips to the pool or lake! Swimming is a favorite summertime activity, but sometimes people can get sick from the water. Recreational Water Illnesses, or RWI, are illnesses you get by swimming in or having contact with contaminated recreational water like pools, hot tubs, and lakes. They can be caused by germs like bacteria, viruses, and protozoa, or by contact with pool treatment chemicals. Here are some of the most common RWI:

Stomach and Intestinal Illnesses

Many RWI are caused by microbes that can affect a person's gastrointestinal (GI) tract. They may cause diarrhea, nausea or vomiting.

- *Escherichia coli* is a large group of hundreds of kinds of bacteria. Although most are harmless, *E. coli* O157:H7 can cause severe illness and kidney damage. Most outbreaks are associated with food, but they can occur in recreational water.
- Noroviruses are a group of viruses that spread through stool or vomit. They can cause illness just hours after exposure. It takes only a small amount of the virus to make you sick.
- Cryptosporidium, or Crypto, can be challenging for pool operators because they are protected by a hard outer shell that lets them survive normal pool chlorine levels. This germ can make people very sick, so you should never swallow recreational water and avoid swimming if you're sick with a diarrheal illness.



Skin & Ear Irritation

- *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is a bacterium that can cause skin rashes and ear infections. Pseudomonas folliculitis, or "hot tub rash", usually appears a few days after exposure. Talk to your medical provider if you've been in a pool or hot tub recently and notice an itchy, red, bumpy rash, or blisters around hair follicles.

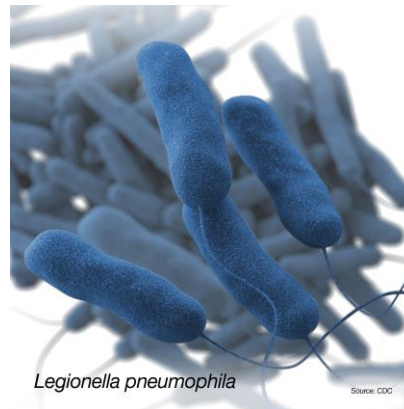
IN THIS ISSUE:

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- Heat Safety
- Mosquito & Tick Control Around the Home
- Public Access Water Monitoring in Marion County

- Swimmer's ear is a *Pseudomonas* infection of the outer ear. It can cause pain, itchiness, swelling, and drainage from the ear. You can avoid this by keeping your ears dry with a swim cap or ear plugs, and drying ears thoroughly with a towel after swimming. Talk to your medical provider before using ear drops.

Respiratory Illnesses

- Legionnaires's disease is a serious respiratory illness that can cause pneumonia and death. You can inhale *Legionella* bacteria through mists from spas and water features. Some people get a milder form of this disease known as Pontiac Fever, which generally has flu-like symptoms.



What can you do:

- Shower before and after swimming. Just 1 minute of showering with soap and warm water can remove dirt that may make chlorine less effective. Showering after swimming will help remove any germs from the water.
- Don't rely on smell. The familiar "pool smell" is combined chlorine, or chlorine that is combined with sweat, sunscreen, or other things that make it less

effective.

- Take children for frequent bathroom breaks. Don't change diapers near the pool.
- Don't swim while sick. Wait 2 weeks after symptoms clear if diagnosed or suspected crypto exposure before swimming.
- Don't swallow water.
- Make sure the pool is chlorinated. Contact MCPHD or talk to your neighborhood pool operator if you have questions.
- Keep animals away from pool. Droppings from geese, ducks, etc. can spread germs.



To learn more about how to stay safe and healthy in recreational water, visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-swimming/>.

Do you want to learn more about RWI and other outbreak data? Check out CDC's [BEAM dashboard](#)!

HEAT SAFETY

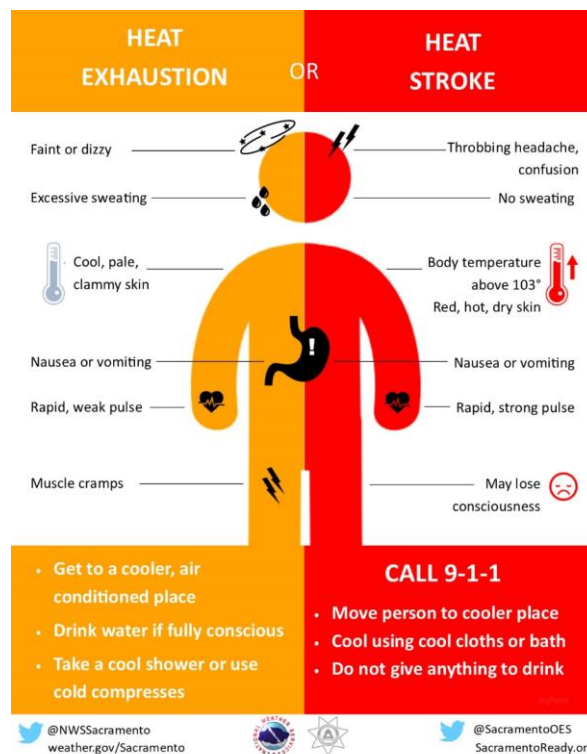
High summer temperatures can be hazardous to health and safety. Did you know that more people die from heat than any other weather-related deaths? This summer, stay safe and healthy by following these tips:



- ☀️ Stay hydrated. Avoid sugary drinks, caffeine, and alcohol which can dehydrate you.
- ☀️ Check on neighbors, especially elderly and friends/family with no AC.
- ☀️ Be mindful of vulnerable populations. Pregnant people, infants, young children,

older adults, people experiencing homelessness, and people with chronic conditions are more sensitive to heat.

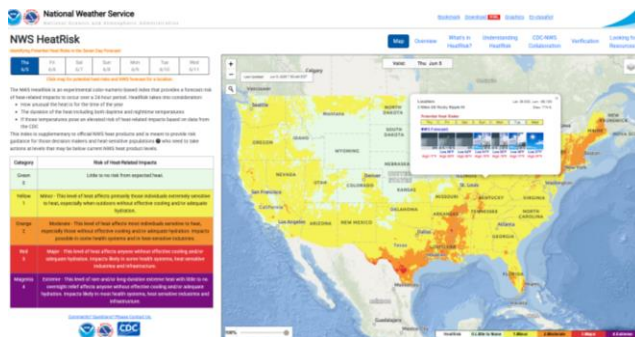
- ☀️ Stay cool by wearing loose, light-colored clothing. Take a cool shower if needed.
- ☀️ NEVER leave children or pets in cars. The interior of a car can heat up quickly and be much hotter than outside temperature. Always check your back seat before getting out, and keep cars locked at all times to prevent children from entering a car.
- ☀️ Stay up to date with [weather alerts](#) and know what they mean.
- ☀️ Know the symptoms of Heat-related illnesses (HRI).
- ☀️ Avoid strenuous outdoor activities and stay inside during the hottest part of the day.
- ☀️ Make your home cool; Weather-strip doors and windows and use drapes or curtains to cover windows. Install air conditioning, don't rely on fans. Fans create air flow and a false sense of comfort, but do not reduce body temperature or prevent heat-related illnesses.
- ☀️ Have a plan for power outages. If you need help developing a plan, visit ready.gov/heat.



Information for outdoor workers:

- ☀️ Hydrate before, during and after work. Drink 1 cup of cool water every 20 minutes even if you don't feel thirsty.
- ☀️ Find shade or a cool area and take regular rest breaks.
- ☀️ Dress for heat. Wear a hat and loose-fitting clothing where allowed.
- ☀️ Know that people have different levels of heat tolerance and how to recognize signs of HRI.
- ☀️ Understand engineering controls, work practices and PPE and how they relate to heat at your workplace. Visit <https://www.osha.gov/heat/worker-information> to learn more.

Learn about your risk of HRI and plan ahead with National Weather Service's NWS HeatRisk tool! This tool uses forecasts, historic weather data, and health data from CDC to assign a color-numeric risk value to an area. The NWS HeatRisk tool can be used for guidance and decision making. Visit www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov/heatrisk/ to learn more.

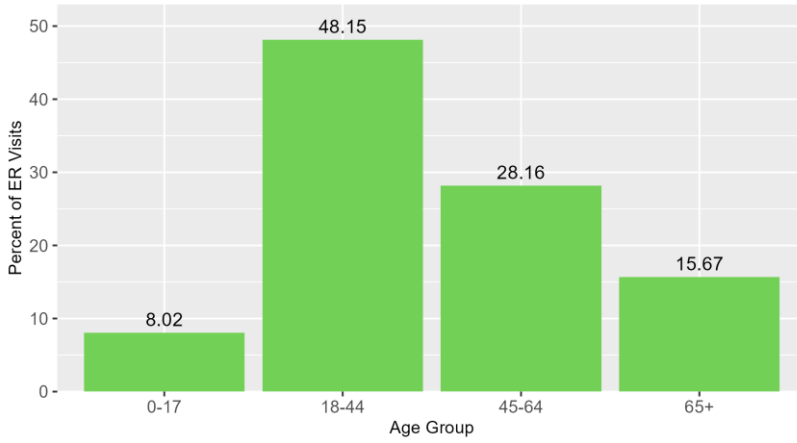


Interested in health and environmental data? Check out CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking website to explore topics like HRI rates, air quality, UV indexes, and more! <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/DataExplorer/>

Below are graphs from the MCPHD Epidemiology Department showing HRI Emergency Visits from 2018-2024.

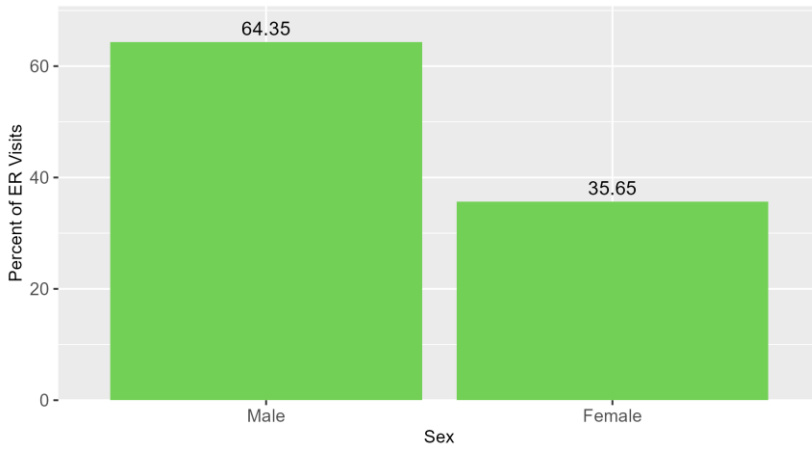


Heat Related Illness Emergency Room Visits by Age, 2018-2024



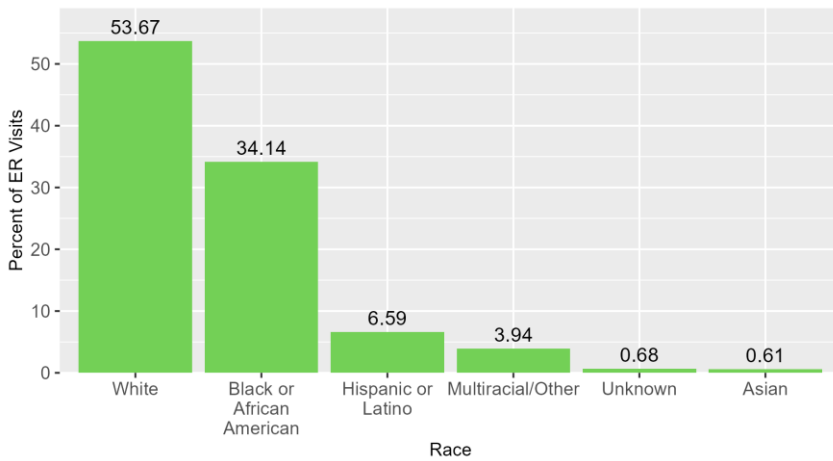
Data Source: ESSENCE Emergency Department Data, 2018-2024

Heat Related Illness Emergency Room Visits by Sex, 2018-2024



Data Source: ESSENCE Emergency Department Data, 2018-2024

Heat Related Illness Emergency Room Visits by Race, 2018-2024



Data Source: ESSENCE Emergency Department Data, 2018-2024

MOSQUITO AND TICK CONTROL AROUND THE HOME

Summertime through October is mosquito season. Not only are mosquitoes a nuisance, but they can also carry and spread diseases. One way to reduce the mosquito population in your neighborhood is by removing water sources. Mosquitoes have a complex life cycle and much of it is spent in an aquatic environment. In fact, mosquitoes only need a pool of water the size of a bottle cap to lay eggs! There are lots of things around your yard that can hold water and should be drained and/or cleaned regularly:

- Tires (contact MCPHD for information on annual tire removal event).
- Birdbaths should be drained, refilled, and cleaned 1-2 times per week.
- Clean clogged gutters to allow proper drainage.
- Empty pet water bowls and provide fresh water daily.
- Trash, debris, tarps, drums, trash/recycling bins, children's toys and pools should be covered or maintained.
- Regularly drain gardening tools like wheelbarrows, flowerpots, and buckets.
- Fix leaky hoses and outside spigots.
- Address areas with poor soil drainage.
- Stock ornamental ponds with fish or frogs, or consider aeration.



Learn more about mosquito management by visiting [EPA](#) and [CDC](#) websites. And check out [Purdue Extension's](#) interactive tool and see if you can spot mosquito breeding sites!

Like mosquitoes, ticks are also active during summer months and can spread diseases to people and to pets. Many of the Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM) techniques listed above will help reduce tick populations too. Some other steps you can take to keep ticks away are:

- Mow your lawn regularly, clear brush, heavy vegetation, and leaf litter.
- Remove old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard.
- Stack wood neatly to keep rodents away.
- Place a three-foot wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas. This helps restrict tick migration into recreational areas.



If you choose to treat your lawn with pesticides, be sure to FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS! Pesticides can be dangerous if handled incorrectly.

Learn more about tick surveillance in Indiana at [Indiana Department of Health's Vector-borne and Zoonotic Disease website!](#)

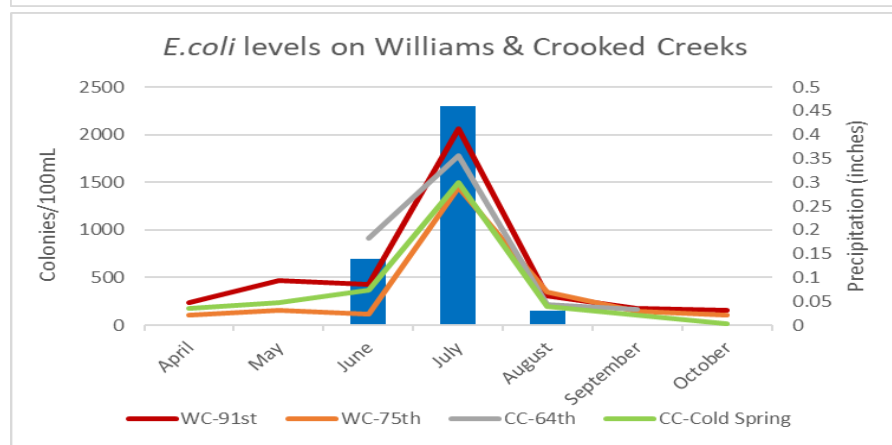
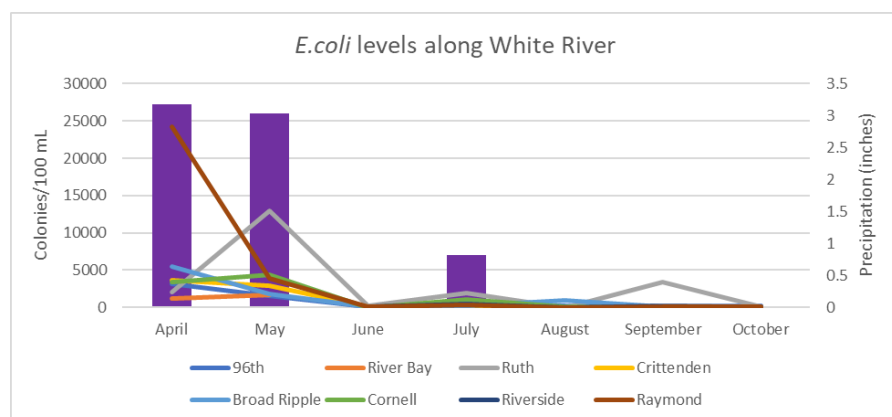
Contact MCPHD Vector Control Program at 317-221-7440 or visit [MCPHD's Mosquito and Rodent Control page](#) to learn more about mosquito and vector control efforts and services in Marion County.

PUBLIC ACCESS WATER MONITORING IN MARION COUNTY

During recreational water season (April-October), MCPHD samples water at 8 sites monthly for *E. coli* to monitor water quality and to be aware of any public health hazards. These sites are selected because of their use for outdoor recreational activities, like boating or fishing. To learn more about water quality and to view data from these sites, visit <https://marionhealth.org/surface-water-program/>.



The graphs below show 2024 monthly *E. coli* sample results from 12 sites (sampling route was reduced to 8 sites in 2025) compared to rainfall during the 72-hour period before the sample was taken. Many of these sites are in a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) area, so it's not unusual for bacteria levels to increase after heavy rain.



IMPORTANT DATES

Observances:

- UV Safety Month (July)
- National Park & Recreation Month (July)

MCPHD Offices Closed:

- Juneteenth: June 19
- Independence Day: July 4
- Labor Day: September 1

TAG (Technical Advisory Group Meetings):

- August 28

LOCAL RESOURCES

○ Healthy Homes Resource

Eligible homeowners and renters are encouraged to apply for the Healthy Homes Resource Program for assistance with lead, radon, electrical, and other hazards. For more information, visit [Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority website](#).

○ Indiana 211

Visit [Indiana211](#) for information on Cooling Centers, Summer Meal Programs, and other community resources.

TRACKING UPDATES

We're moving! We are moving to a new website. Stay tuned for more updates!

*Marion County Public Health Department
Environmental Tracking*

[https://marionhealth.org/ephtracking/
MCPHDDtracking@marionhealth.org](https://marionhealth.org/ephtracking/MCPHDDtracking@marionhealth.org)