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How to celebrate safely while boating this season



Boating season is here, and we couldn't be more excited. In our opinion, having a good time on the water is what summer is all about. However, behaving irresponsibly leads to accidents that could put your life and others' lives at risk.

Boating under the influence is a federal offense subject to a \$1,000 fine. In addition, criminal penalties (as well as possible jail time) are subject to fines as high as \$5,000. Therefore, it's crucial that you refrain from drinking and boating.

Keep reading for some boating best practices and the answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Ready to take your celebration to the water? Make sure to follow these rules when you do:

Have a sober captain. It doesn't matter whether you're in a car or a boat – drinking and driving is always a bad idea. A sober captain guarantees that everyone has fun and stays safe. And as we mentioned, a drunk (or drinking) captain faces large fines and potential jail time.

Remember, the decision to designate a sober captain is not just about adhering to the law but also about prioritizing the well-being and safety of everyone

involved. By staying alcohol-free, the captain can focus entirely on their duties and navigate the waters carefully.

Boat days are all about having fun – but it's important that you don't go overboard (pun intended). Therefore, the captain should designate a sober first mate to help keep the crew in check, which minimizes distractions and potential dangers.

The first mate plays a vital role in promoting a safe boating experience. They can assist the captain in monitoring the weather conditions, keeping an eye out for other vessels, and ensuring that all safety protocols are followed. With their sober presence, they can react swiftly and effectively in case of emergencies, keeping everyone on board secure.

Before the party starts, ensure everyone on board has a properly fitting life jacket (including kids and pets). A life jacket that is too large will slip off the wearer, and one that's too small might not offer sufficient buoyancy. Wearing a life jacket ensures everyone on board stays safe, which is always in style.

When it comes to enjoying a day out on the water, the last thing you want is a mishap that puts a damper on the fun.

Bringing glassware on board may seem convenient, but the risks outweigh the benefits. If glass shatters while onboard, you risk damaging the boat's upholstery or, worse, causing harm to someone's skin.

Instead, pack cooler cups for your next boating adventure. Not only will these cups keep your drinks cool, but they're also specifically built to withstand the rigors of outdoor adventures.

Whether you're on the water for a weekend or an hour, basking in the sun's rays can become draining. Not to mention, they significantly amplify the effects of alcohol. Ensure everyone on board stays hydrated and eating plenty of snacks. Additionally, throwing some electrolytes – like coconut water or Liquid IV – into your cooler is not a bad idea.

Typically, the crew outnumbers the captain on any boating adventure. Therefore, listening to their directions will make their job at the helm much easier.

Don't pressure them to drink or roughhouse while on board. Instead, follow their rules, and behave responsibly

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

The Breeze

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above: The boating season is the perfect time to make lasting memories with friends and family on the water. And if you keep a few safety rules in mind, there will be many fun-filled days in the future.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*

ENJOY THE *great outdoors*



SUMMER FUN IN THE LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

Summer is a time to embrace all of the outdoor activities that can only be enjoyed in the warmer weather. With a variety of such activities available in the area, people are out and about taking in nature and having fun in the sun.

In the Chain O'Lakes region, the Lake County Forest Preserve District provides the opportunity for all to participate in a large variety of the many outdoor activities of their choosing.

HIKING

A favorite activity and one that's associated with forest preserves is hiking. Traveling along the trails in the Lake County Forest Preserves can be a long or

a short trip depending on which trail is chosen. With over 209 miles of trails, the choices up to the hikers.

The Des Plaines River Trail, the largest in the region, is a 31.4-mile gravel trail that spans almost the entire length of Lake County as it winds its way through 12 different forest preserves.

The crushed-gravel trails are considered to be accessible but may require help pushing wheelchairs if they are not motorized. Other trails not considered to be accessible are those of short mowed grass or covered with wood chips.

Shorter trails are usually chosen for family walks, by those not in top shape or by people not ready to conquer large distances. The shorter trails give a variety of different options. Some of the area trails allow dogs, but they must be leashed and

picked up after.

Visit the website www.lcfd.org for maps and information on the trails including which are currently open.

CYCLING

Bicycle riding is another healthy activity for summer and a great way to share outdoor time with family members or friends. Pack a lunch to enjoy and as with all forest preserve activities bring plenty of water to stay hydrated.

Bring bikes or go to the marina at Independence Grove Forest Preserve in Libertyville where bicycles may be rented. At this location there's a paved path that loops around the preserve and its 129-acre lake. The trail has mild inclines and is considered not too difficult to ride.

Again, visit the website for a list of trails

where biking is allowed and to print a map of the areas' trails open to biking.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseback riding is allowed on 82 miles of trails but riders must bring their own horses. There are no horse rental areas in the forest preserves.

However there are several horse trailer parking areas available in the forest preserves.

Horseback riding comes with a cost in the preserves. A yearly permit may be purchased for \$50 a horse (up to three) for residents of the county and \$100 a horse (up to three) for nonresidents.

For those who are not ready to commit to a year's pass but want to come to the forest preserves and ride for a day or two, a daily pass for \$5 a day for residents and

Enjoying a day of fishing on Hastings Lake is a relaxing and peaceful way to spend time outdoors and test or improve your fishing skills.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM ELLIOTT *The Breeze*

\$10 for nonresidents can be purchased. Passes need to be purchased in advance.

The forest preserves have rules for horseback riding on the trails which are shared with hikers and bikers. Most of the trails are shared although there are a few open to horses only.

Horses must stay to the right side of the trail, allow hikers and walkers the right of way, and notify others when passing from behind. For a complete list of rules for riders visit the horseback riding section on the website.

FISHING

Who doesn't love to fish? Everyone from youngsters to adults seem to enjoy the thrill of catching fish. Fathers and father figures are especially known to enjoy teaching their children to fish and spending time with a fishing pole in hand.

The first thing needed to fish in the forest preserves is a valid Illinois Fishing License for those older than 16 years of age. These may be purchased at the marina at Independence Grove, from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, or at various sporting goods and bait shops.

Catch-and-release fishing is encouraged as it helps maintain a healthy fish population. Independence Grove and Nippersink only allow catch-and-release while other fishing areas allow anglers to keep their catch.

Information about fishing in the forest preserves is available on the website. Download and print the definitive guide for fishing in the Lake County Forest Preserves. The guide includes maps of 17 major fishing locations and includes the fish typically found there. Also included are tips from the forest preserve staff that will help make the fishing experience more enjoyable.

GOLF

Golf is another favorite warm weather sport and there are three distinct courses available. Heading to the forest preserves is often a first choice for area golfers as it offers a variety of different types of courses that will fit with most golfing styles and ability.

The courses are also reasonably priced.

Brae Loch is an 18-hole, par-70 course lined with mature trees and sweeping vistas.

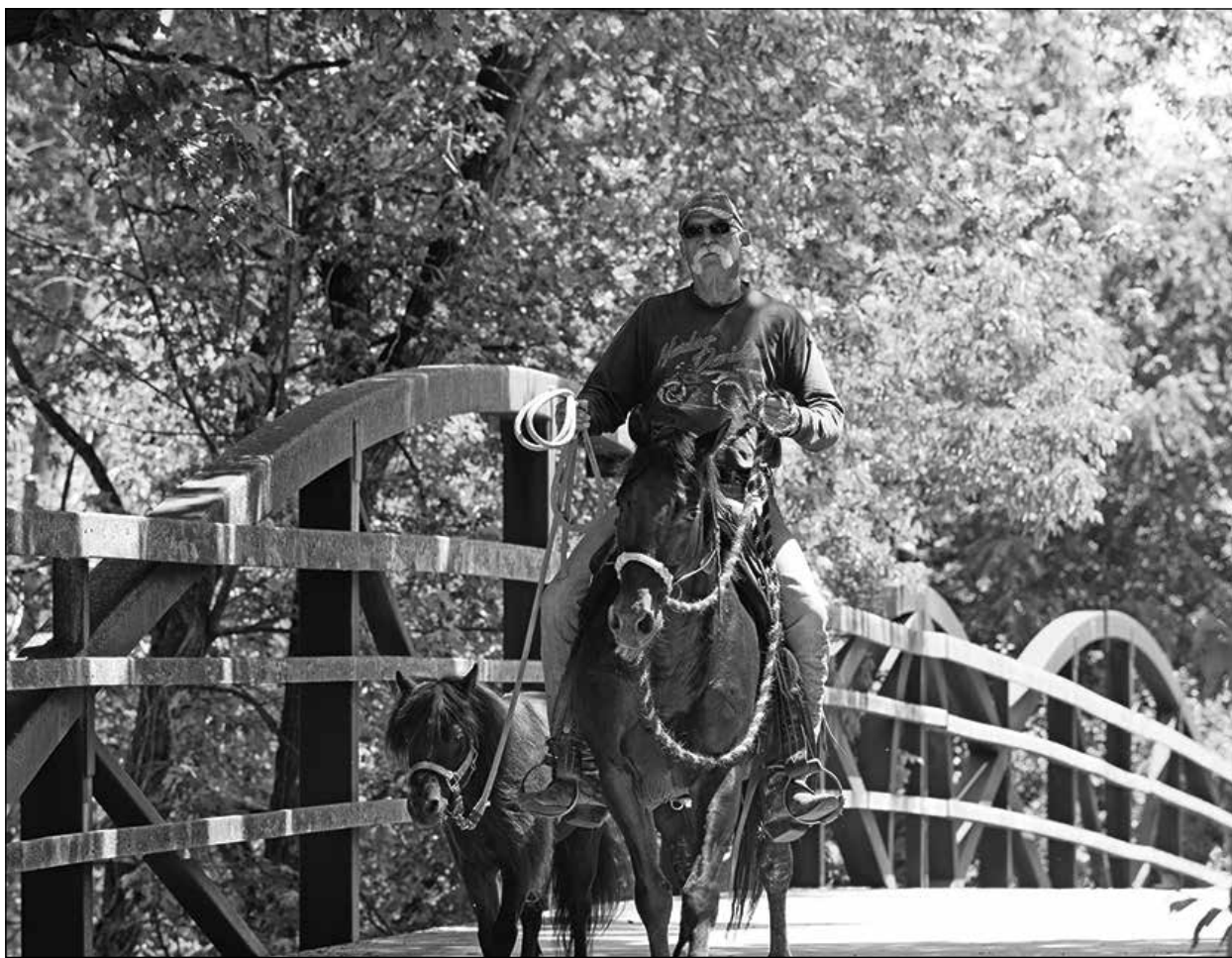
Countryside features two separate 18-hole courses – the Prairie Course and the Traditional Course. The Prairie Course has many areas of tall undulating prairie grass which protects a variety of protected plant and small animals according to the website.

The traditional course features smaller greens that require a precise approach, according to the website, in part because the greens are smaller and there is an opportunity for more birdies.

The third course is Thunderhawk, which



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIM KARPELES *The Breeze*



above: The savannah is a great place for a walk on a beautiful summer day. **at left:** Spend the day on the trails riding a horse – or as this gentleman is doing, ride a horse and walk a pony at the same time.

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CELEBRATE SAFELY • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and respectfully.
Below are the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about alcohol and boating:

Can you drink and drive a boat?

Boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal and can result in severe fines or jail time. In addition, it can put your life and others' lives at risk.

Can you drink alcohol while on a boat?

As long as you're not the one operating the boat (aka the captain) and are over the age of 21, it's okay to responsibly drink alcohol aboard. Again, boat captains should never drink and drive a boat under any circumstances.

Does alcohol affect you differently on a boat?

Technically speaking, being on a boat

won't raise your blood-alcohol content any higher than it would on land. However, drinking while boating does make you feel more intoxicated— thanks to the sun and the constant rocking motion – which affects your judgment and reaction time.

How much alcohol should be consumed while boating?

It's recommended that boat passengers limit their alcohol consumption to one drink per hour (or less). Be wary of the effects of alcohol while you're on the water to keep yourself and others safe.

What is the blood-alcohol limit for boating?

The blood-alcohol limit for boating is the same as that for driving a car: 0.08%.

Want more insider boating tips? Visit discoverboating.com.

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Help stop the spread of AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reminds boaters to help stop the spread of invasive plants and animals in our waters as part of the Great Lakes Landing Blitz.

Starting this summer, Wisconsin's long-running Clean Boats Clean Waters Landing Blitz is now a part of the Great Lakes Landing Blitz. The effort is a collaboration of all of the Great Lakes states and provinces to educate boaters that simple clean-up steps and draining water from the boat and live wells can help to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

From June 30 to July 9, many boaters in Wisconsin were greeted at landings and

access points by volunteers and regional aquatic invasive species prevention partners. Clean Boats Clean Waters boat inspectors gave out a brand-new red, white and blue boat trailer sticker with a graphic showing all of the places where plants, tiny animals and potentially contaminated water can hide on a boat and trailer.

"It only takes a minute to remove plants, animals, mud or debris from boats, trailers and equipment and to drain all water from bilges, livewells and bait buckets," said Erin McFarlane, the Statewide Clean Boats Clean Waters Educator with Extension Lakes. "These simple steps help keep invasive species from hitching a ride from one lake or river

to another."

Every boater and angler has a role to play in protecting Wisconsin's lakes and rivers. Everyone should follow these prevention steps, required by Wisconsin state law, to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in our waters:

- Inspect boats, trailers and equipment;
- Remove all attached aquatic plants and animals;
- Drain all water from boats, vehicles and equipment, including livewells and buckets containing fish;
- Never move plants or live fish away from a waterbody;
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash; and

• Buy minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer.

Additionally, only use leftover minnows when fishing with them on the same body of water. They can be used on other waters only if no lake or river water or other fish have been added to their container.

To learn more about invasive species and their impacts on Wisconsin's waters and economy, visit the DNR's invasive species webpage at dnr.wi.gov.

The Department of Natural Resources urges boaters and anglers to drain their live wells and fish buckets before leaving boat launches.

TRAVEL WISCONSIN PHOTO *The Breeze*

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is ranked as one of the best par-5 courses in the Midwest. The course was designed by legendary golf course architect Robert Trent Jones II.

All three courses are certified by the Audubon International Society for their environmental stewardship. Bookings can be made online.

CLASSES

While there are numerous activities to enjoy in the forest preserves on their own, there are also a variety of classes and camp activities offered to teach participants more about nature and life in the forest preserves.

These classes vary in content and are designed for specific age groups. No exceptions can be made to the ages allowed in each of the programs, according to the Lake County Forest Preserves website. Each program is created to address the cognitive, emotional and physical abilities of the participants.

Fishing appears to be among the most popular of the summer

programs. Each program consists of three hours a day of time spent fishing for three to five days. Even though they have five different fishing programs listed, all of them are full for this summer.

However, there are several other programs offered that could be of interest to children.

Boots of a Biologist is offered for children 9 to 11 years old who enjoy learning about animal and plant species found in the area. They do this as a hands-on investigation and group science activity.

To enjoy the Boots of a Biologist program, children need to like getting dirty as they dig into nature to discover how to find and evaluate different plants and animal species that make their home in the forest preserves. Registration is required and a participation fee is charged.

For younger children, the Nature Curiosity program is touted as a good introduction to nature. This program for children 4 to 5 years of age and introduces them to the wonders of nature

while allowing them to use their imagination and creativity. The program requires an adult to be registered with them.

The next Nature Curiosity program will be held July 18 to July 20 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on those days. It takes place in Grant Woods and registration and fee payment are required.

Other classes are available through August. Check the website and find a fitting experience for your children.

An option for a fun evening is the Concerts In the Plaza events held on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. through Aug. 15. Bring chairs, relax and enjoy music while overlooking the lake. Those who wish to bring a picnic dinner are welcome to do so. Food is also available for purchase onsite. The music varies each week so check the website for who will be appearing that week. There is a \$10 charge for parking.

For more information, visit www.lcfd.org or call 847-367-6640. The preserves can also be found on Facebook and Twitter.



above: Riding the River Trail on a bicycle is a favorite summer activity for many. The trail offers a smooth, gravel path that's bike friendly.

at right: As the sun sets, this fisherman casts his line from shore. It's often said that fish bite more at daybreak and sunset.

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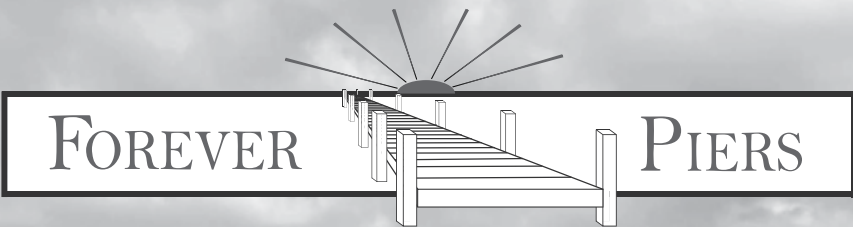
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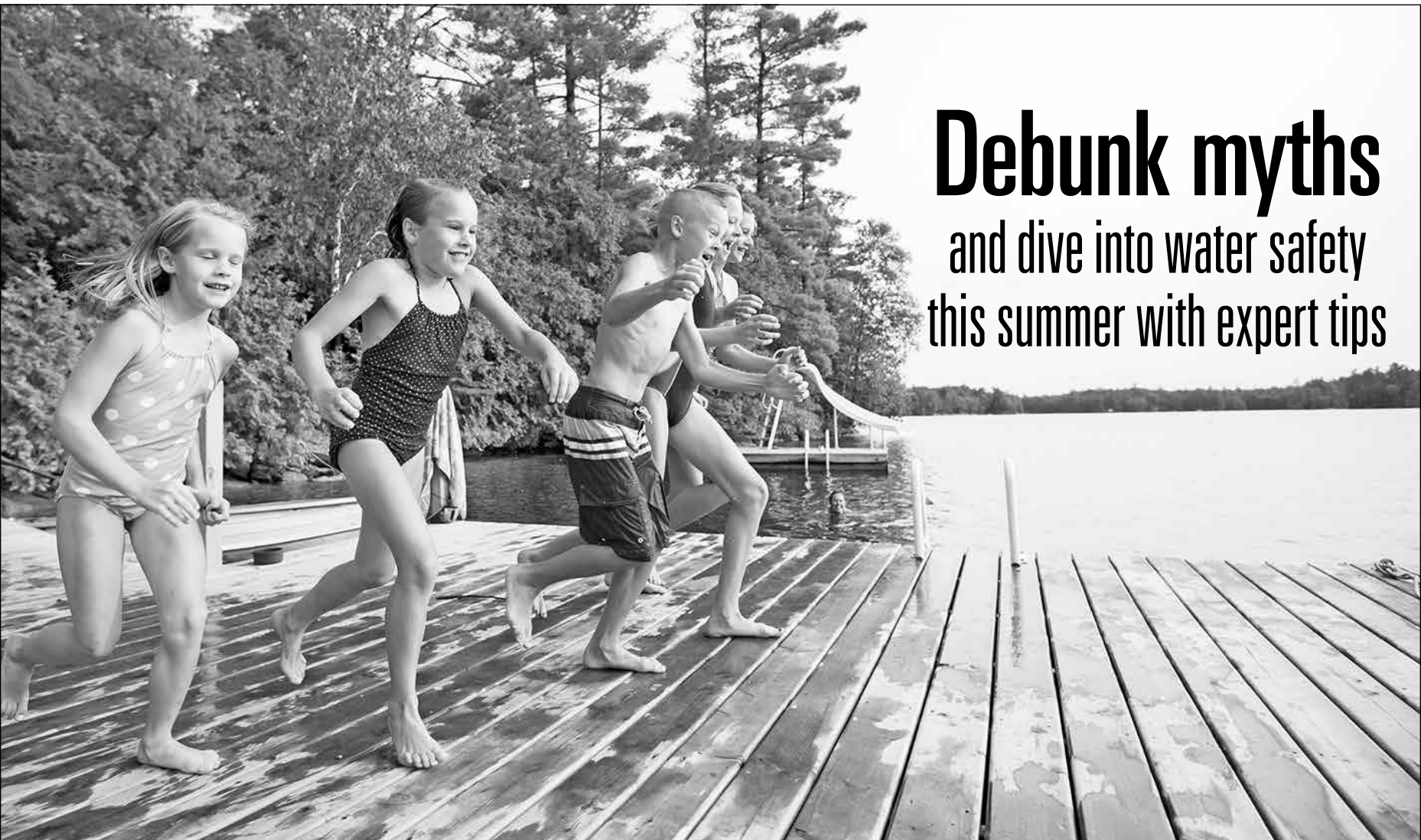
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Debunk myths and dive into water safety this summer with expert tips

Booked summer plans? Check. New bathing suits for the family? Check. Swim lesson enrollment? Priority check!

Water safety is essential, yet many people get confused by misinformation that puts kids at risk. Step Into Swim provides need-to-know information to ensure swimming activities are safe and fun for all involved. The program is led by Rowdy Gaines, three-time Olympic Gold Medalist and Vice President of Partnerships and Development at the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance.

With a passion for creating more swimmers and expanding access to swim education, Gaines wants to keep everyone safer this summer by debunking some of the most widespread myths about water safety.

Myth – Splashing and screaming are signs of drowning. While 83% of parents who have a child ages 14 or under are confident in their child's ability to be safe in the water, many parents (60%) incorrectly assume someone who is drowning will draw attention to themselves by splashing and screaming, according to a Step Into Swim survey conducted by The Harris Poll. Drowning is silent, meaning the person won't scream or splash

because they are struggling to breathe. This underscores the importance of swim safety.

Myth – Drowning takes several minutes to occur. Drowning can happen in seconds, so it's critical to consistently watch children in the water - even if they know how to swim. Watch kids closely because drowning can happen in the time it takes to send a text message.

Myth – Parents can teach their kids to swim and lessons aren't needed. While supporting your child and encouraging water safety is important, teaching kids to swim is best left to trained instructors. Learning to swim from a qualified instructor reduces the drowning risk by 88% among children ages 1 to 4, according to the medical journal Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine. Caregivers can complement the lessons learned from swim instructors by practicing the skills with their children.

Myth – Floaties and water wings are safe and help kids learn to swim. Parents may think floaties and water wings keep children safe in the water, but they offer a false sense of security. Many children don't realize that when they remove the water wings, they lose their ability to remain afloat. Two-thirds of parents who have

a child ages 14 or under (66%) believe floaties and water wings keep children safe in the water, according to the survey. However, they are not recognized as safe personal flotation devices. Caregivers must keep a constant eye on children in the water to make sure floaties remain on and secure.

Myth – Dry drowning is a danger. Dry drowning is not a medically accepted term and may be misused to refer to other medical conditions, such as pulmonary edema or laryngospasm. Drowning injury is caused by lack of oxygen and respiratory impairment from submersion in water. It doesn't refer to the amount of water entering the lungs, according to the American Red Cross. To help avoid drowning, families need to enroll kids in swim lessons and practice supervision.

Water safety steps for everyone

Unfortunately, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death in children ages 1 to 4, and the second leading cause for children ages 5 to 14, according to the CDC. Before jumping into the water, follow these best practices to help keep children safe.

- Enroll your child in swimming lessons. Parents have a responsibility to keep kids safe in the water;

- Keep toys away from water when not in use. These can be distractions for children, who may overreach and accidentally fall in the water;

- Designate a water watcher to keep a close eye on children and put the cell phones down;

- Only practice safe behaviors, such as entering the pool feet first and walking instead of running;

- Avoid breath-holding activities;
- Learn CPR and keep your skills fresh with ongoing training;

- Keep kids hydrated and take frequent breaks from the sun to limit heat exposure; and

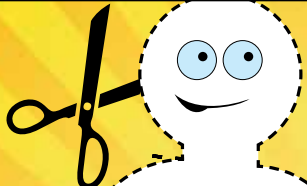
- If you have a pool, use multiple layers of protection, such as pool covers, fencing and locked doors.

For more resources and information, visit StepIntoSwim.org.

(BPT)

Learning to swim is a lifesaving skill that empowers children to be confident in the water.

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