



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

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Contact: Kevin Cate
(850) 245-4111

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ISSUES
AMOEBIIC ENCEPHALITIS ADVISORY FOR FLORIDA FRESHWATER**
~~ Second Probable Human Case of Amoebic Encephalitis ~~

TALLAHASSEE— Florida Department of Health (DOH) Surgeon General Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H., today issued a medical advisory for all freshwater swimming areas in the state of Florida. Two probable human cases of Amoebic Encephalitis have been identified in Central Florida residents since August, and there is a heightened concern that additional residents may become ill. The most recent case resulted in the death of a Florida child.

Symptoms include headache, fever, nausea and vomiting, stiff neck, confusion, lack of attention to people and surroundings, loss of balance and bodily control, seizures and hallucinations. The public is urged to contact a medical professional immediately if experiencing any of these symptoms.

"There is an increased risk of infection by this organism in all freshwater areas throughout Florida, especially during hot summer months," State Surgeon General Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. said. "Any kind of water sports or activity such as wakeboarding, water skiing, swimming or diving puts the public at a greater risk."

The Department of Health is offering the following precautions:

Wear nose clips or hold your nose when swimming, jumping or diving in any fresh water - Closed nostrils reduce your risk of infection by amoeba, a rare but life threatening condition.

Do not swim in warm standing water, such as ponds, lakes, storm water retention areas or in areas posted "No Swimming" - Bacteria and other harmful organisms thrive in warm, standing water. Seek prompt medical attention if you become ill after swimming in freshwater.

Avoiding areas with obvious algal blooms - Contact with algal blooms may cause skin rash, runny nose and burning eyes.

Naegleria is a microscopic amoeba most commonly found in the upper layer of sediment in the bottom of lakes and ponds with mud floors. The threat of infection, although rare, increases during the summer months when the water temperature rises.

Infection with *Naegleria fowleri* causes the disease primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM). The amoeba invades the brain and the disease progresses rapidly usually resulting in death within 3 to 7 days. This infection cannot be spread from person to person or contracted from a properly maintained swimming pool.



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For more information visit <http://www.myfloridaeh.com/community/aquatic/index.html> or the
CDC Healthy Swimming website at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/>.

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