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PREVENT WATER WORRIES; PRACTICE SWIM SAFETY

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OCALA, Fla.—Each year in Florida, enough children to fill three to four preschool classrooms drown and do not live to see their fifth birthdays. For every child who dies from drowning, another five receive emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries.

“Drowning is the leading cause of death in Florida for children ages 1 to 4, and Florida’s death by drowning rate for youths ages 1 to 14 is the second highest in the nation,” said Erin Hess, Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. “The large number of backyard pools in Florida, combined with lakes, springs and the ocean, means that there are ample opportunities for children to fall victim to drowning.”

During Healthy and Safe Swimming Week, May 22–28, the Department of Health in Marion County is focusing on pool safety. Follow the below simple safety steps to help make pool time safer for the whole family:

- **Watch** when children are around or in the pool; children should never swim alone.
- **Use barriers.** Make your home pool safer with a four-sided fence that includes alarms, gates and locks.
- **Educate.** Teach children how to swim. Not every child is ready to swim at the same age, so ask your family doctor.
- **Be ready.** Learn CPR and get re-certified every two years. Keep a phone and safety equipment near the pool.

Learn more about water and swim safety by visiting www.waterprooffl.com, www.poolsafely.gov, <http://www.ndpa.org/> and www.safekids.org.

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