1.) Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week – May 19-25, 2014 -- RWII Prevention Week takes place the week before Memorial Day and focuses on simple steps parents, pool owners and operators, and public health officials can do to maximize the health benefits of water activity, while avoiding water-associated illness and injury.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website has communication materials (videos, podcasts, posters, fact sheets, mobile apps, etc.) to educate the public on how to prevent RWII and drowning prevention. To learn more, see: http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/rwi-prevention-week/.

2.) Beach Monitoring in Virginia -- Bacteria levels in beach water are monitored at 46 public beaches on the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean of Virginia during the swimming season (May-September). When bacteria levels exceed safe levels, VDH issues swimming advisories to inform the public of health risks from other disease-causing organisms such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites.

New for 2014: Follow VDH’s Beach Monitoring Program on Twitter (@VDHBeach) to receive weekly results and swimming advisories: https://twitter.com/VDHBeach.

For links to information about current swimming advisories and monitored beaches, beach advisory and monitoring data, links to local beaches, local health department contacts, and special projects such as 2013 qPCR demonstration project and Virginia Tech’s microbial source tracking report, please visit: http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/DEE/BeachMonitoring/.

3.) "Beaches and Bacteria" – This article was first published August 2004 in Virginia Water Central, newsletter of the Virginia Water Resources Research Center. It was updated in January 2014. The article is available at http://vawatercentralnewsgrouper.wordpress.com/2014/01/29/beaches-and-bacteria-january-2014-update-of-an-august-2004-virginia-water-central-article/ and describes:

- The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act
- Virginia’s bacteria standards
- The types of indicator organisms monitored at Virginia’s beaches
- How people responsible for beach closures/advisories decide what is safe
- The difference between a beach advisory and a beach closure
- Microbial Source Tracking

4.) "Safely Enjoying Virginia’s Natural Waters" -- This brochure, published by the Virginia Department of Health, covers topics such as:

- What organisms are in natural waters and where do they come from?
- What are the health risks and how are they determined?
- Why avoid natural water after a heavy rain?
- What you can do to protect yourself.
Go to http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/DEE/BeachMonitoring/ to download a PDF document of the brochure (also available in Spanish).

5.) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- Healthy Swimming & Recreational Water web page: http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/ --

Provides information on the following topics and more:

Recreational Water Illnesses -- Germs & Illnesses, Education & Prevention Materials, State Resources…
Swimmer Protection -- Tips for Healthy Swimming, Pool and Hot Tub User Information…
Other Recreational Water Issues -- Drowning, Injuries, Boating, Sun Protection, Extreme Heat…
Model Aquatic Health Code -- FAQs, Development, Committees…
Pools & Hot Tubs -- Design, Operation, Disinfection, Regulation…
Oceans, Lakes, & Rivers -- Beach Monitoring, Water Quality Indicators…
Natación Saludable -- Información en Español…

This special announcement is sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Virginia Department of Health as a grant to the Virginia Water Monitoring Council. To learn more about the Council, see our website at http://www.VirginiaWMC.org or contact Jane Walker at the address below. If you have water-monitoring related news of regional or statewide interest, send it to Jane Walker and ask that it be distributed to the VWMC membership.

Tax-deductible contributions can be made to the VWMC to support our information updates and other VWMC activities. Make checks payable to: "Virginia Tech Foundation" and on the memo portion of the check, include "Fund #872802." Mail contributions to Jane Walker, VWMC administrator at the address below.

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