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News Release

For Immediate Release

Keep Memorial Day Weekend Safe with These Tips

Memorial Day is Monday, May 31, 2010! Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer with pools opening, barbecues, and picnics with friends and family. Enjoy the first summer holiday with a few reminders from the Springfield-Greene County Health Department that will keep you, your family and friends healthy and safe! Practicing good water and food safety will help prevent illness at holiday activities.

Recreational water can be a fun way to cool off, but make sure to take precautions to prevent recreational water illness (RWIs). RWIs can be caused by coming in contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, interactive fountains, water play areas, lakes and rivers. Take the following steps to prevent RWIs:

- Don’t swim or let your children swim with diarrhea
- Don’t swallow pool or recreational water
- Practice good hygiene. Wash your hands and shower with soap before and after swimming

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department tests water samples from public, natural recreational water areas. These public water sites are not sanctioned swimming areas. Tests results are only informative and people should use caution when swimming in these areas. Water samples are tested for E. coli bacteria levels. A high level of E. coli is an indicator of water contamination. Water contamination can cause recreational water illness, most commonly diarrhea in humans. The sites that will be tested weekly include:

- Crighton Access on the James River
- Lake Springfield below the dam
- Little Sac River at Farm Road 125 South of Highway O
- Wilson Creek at Farm Road 123 and Farm Road 146

To access this information, visit www.springfieldmo.gov/health or call 417-874-1205.

Picnicking and barbecues are fun, but food safety should be a top priority, especially in the warmer weather! Food that is left out in the sun or in warm temperatures allows harmful bacteria to grow which can cause foodborne illnesses. Follow these safety tips to keep you food delicious and safe:

- Keep work areas clean: wash hands, utensils and cutting boards with soap and water.
- Cook meat thoroughly and use a thermometer to check food temperatures.
- Cook eggs thoroughly. Do not eat raw eggs or foods that contain raw eggs.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separately so they do not contaminate each other
- Thoroughly wash all fresh fruits and vegetables. Prepare fruits and vegetables with clean utensils on a clean surface. Make sure to eat prepared fruits and vegetables within four hours. If not, refrigerate these items to avoid risk of foodborne illness.
- Take fire safety precautions when cooking on a barbeque grill or outdoor fireplace. Keep kids, pets, and flammable objects at a safe distance from the grill.

For more information contact: Katie Towns-Jeter, Public Information Administrator, 417-874-1205