

Memorial Day safety: How to stay safe around the water this holiday weekend

Extra caution needed in time of COVID-19; water-safety video available

PHOENIX (May 21, 2020) -- As more people look to get out of the house this Memorial Day weekend, Banner Health safety experts strongly suggest they practice social distancing as well as water-safety precautions during the upcoming three-day weekend.

"Now is really the time for extra caution out there. There is a lot going on. We need to practice social distancing and we still need to be focused on being safe around water," said Tracey Fejt, trauma-prevention coordinator for Banner Health. (Fejt is pronounced "fate").

Banner recommends following these COVID-19 precautions:

- Wear a mask when you're in public near others.
- Stay six feet away from others.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Wipe down surfaces that may be infected.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also suggests that people involved in water sports not share goggles, nose clips, snorkels and other personal items. The CDC also advises those wearing face coverings not to wear them in the water since they can be difficult to breathe through when they're wet.

In addition to COVID-19 precautions, people need to take care to avoid other common lake traumas and accidents, Fejt says.

[EDITABLE VIDEO: Fejt speaking at Tempe Town Lake about keeping safe at the lakes](#)

"We see a lot at the lake but the worse thing we see is drowning and that is preventable and so we really need to have people in life jackets."

Even strong swimmers need the protective jackets, she said.

"Just because you know how to swim, it doesn't make you 'drown-proof'. Good swimmers can drown because they exert themselves further than they can go and can't get themselves back."

Swimmers can get injured in boat or jet ski collisions or be overcome by carbon monoxide from boats or their legs can cramp because of dehydration caused by not drinking enough water.

"If you are in the water, you are not thinking about drinking water, but you are not having that water around you absorbed into you," Fejt says.

"Alcohol is not hydration. It dehydrates you."

About Banner Health

As one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country, the team at Banner Health is committed to ensuring all Banner locations are a safe place for care. Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals and an array of other services, including: Banner Imaging, Banner Telehealth and Banner Urgent Care. Team members are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of patients, be it a routine checkup, elective surgery or an urgent health service. Waiting room and employee workstation layouts maintain proper social distancing; screenings are conducted at hospital entrances to verify that all employees and visitors are well; and, all Banner physicians are equipped to visit patients remotely. Learn more about Banner's commitment to safety at bannerhealth.com/safecare.

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<http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/COVIDwatersafety>