

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**LDH provides guidance to help families enjoy a safe Memorial Weekend**

Baton Rouge, La. (May 27, 2022) —As Memorial Day approaches, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is sharing guidance to help families enjoy a safe holiday weekend.

“Memorial Day is the unofficial start of summer with the kids out of school and families and friends gathering together, and we want everyone to have a safe, fun weekend,” said State Health Officer Dr. Joseph Kanter. “With COVID cases increasing, we want to make sure everyone stays vigilant and updated on their vaccines, pay special attention when they’re in or around water and drink lots of fluids to help deal with the excessive heat. I urge everyone to follow a few simple, but critical steps to keep you and your children safe this weekend and summer.”

COVID-19 guidance

With the increase in COVID cases across Louisiana, LDH reminds everyone to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- **Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities.** If possible, gather with friends and family outdoors this weekend so that everyone has plenty of room to spread out.
- **It's a great time to make sure everyone in the family is up to date on their COVID vaccinations.** CDC and LDH recommend everyone 5 and up get vaccinated and boosted as soon as they are eligible. CDC recently strengthened its recommendation for a second booster at least four months after the first booster for everyone ages 50 and older and ages 12 and older who are immunocompromised.
- **Those who are at higher risk of severe outcome from COVID** (older and/or underlying medical conditions) should consider taking additional precautions and mask in indoor public places.

COVID vaccination locations and treatment options

- To get your questions answered, schedule an appointment or homebound vaccination, or speak directly with a medical professional: Call COVID-19 Support Hotline at 1-855-453-0774.
- To find vaccination locations near you: Visit covid.gov or text your ZIP code to GETVAX (438829) in English or VACUNA (822862) in Spanish.
- If you get COVID-19, you have treatment options. If you test positive for COVID, talk to a doctor as soon as possible about treatment options. Contact your healthcare provider or go to covid.gov to find a Test-to-Treat location near you. You can also call the Test-to-Treat call center to get help in English, Spanish and more than 150 languages: 1-800-232-0233 (7am to 11pm CT).

Water safety guidance

Preliminary LDH data shows that 25 infants and children died from drowning last

year. **LDH urges parents and families to take precautions to help prevent drowning:**

- Watch children when they are in or around water at all times; avoid getting distracted.
- Teach children how to swim and water survival skills.
- Take CPR classes. Visit cpr.heart.org to find a class near you.
- If you own a pool or spa, install layers of protection, including a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- Keep children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings to avoid entrapments.
- Wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when boating or participating in other water activities.
- Swim in designated swimming areas and use extreme caution around natural bodies of water which may have unpredictable currents and undertow.
- Visit PoolSafely.gov to learn more.

Heat safety guidance

Even a short amount of time exposed to extreme heat can lead to illness and can result in a trip to the emergency department or even cause death if not properly treated. **It is especially important to make sure children, elderly adults and pets are kept cool during this time of year. Here are ways to prepare for the heat:**

- Dress in lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Continuously drink water even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Eat small meals more often.
- Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days. Take time out to find a cool place.
- Stay indoors when possible.
- Learn the [signs of heat-related illness](#), and what you should do.
- Visit to <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.html> to learn more.

Fireworks safety guidance

Although fireworks are exciting, they also can be dangerous if users fail to take the proper precautions. **Please follow the following guidelines to ensure a safe, fun Memorial Day:**

- Only adults should handle fireworks.
- Do not use fireworks while under the influence of alcohol or other substances.
- Always light fireworks outdoors on a flat, smooth surface away from homes, dry leaves or other flammable materials.
- Consider keeping a bucket of water or a fire extinguisher handy when using fireworks.
- Never pick up fireworks or place them in your pockets.
- Do not attempt to re-light fireworks that appear to be malfunctioning.
- Do not put your face, arms or other body parts over a firework to examine it.

About the Louisiana Department of Health

The Louisiana Department of Health strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state

residents. The Louisiana Department of Health includes the Office of Public Health, Office of Aging & Adult Services, Office of Behavioral Health, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, and Healthy Louisiana (Medicaid). To learn more, visit www.ldh.la.gov or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or our [blog](#).

Media Contact:

Michelle McCalope, Press Secretary

225-432-7203 or michelle.mccalope@la.gov

ldhnews@la.gov is not a monitored email account

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