

Boy dies from brain-eating amoeba found at Texas splash pad

September 28 2021

A child has died after being infected with a rare brain-eating amoeba that was found at a Texas splash pad he had visited, and a review discovered lapses in water-quality testing at several parks, officials said Monday.

Officials in Arlington, located between Dallas and Fort Worth, said the city and Tarrant County Public Health were notified on Sept. 5 that a child had been hospitalized with primary amebic meningoencephalitis, a rare and often fatal infection caused by the [naegleria fowleri amoeba](#). The boy, who was not identified by [officials](#), died at the hospital on Sept. 11.

After learning of the child's illness, [health officials](#) began investigating and closed all of the city's public splash pads. City officials said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the presence of the amoeba in [water samples](#) from the Don Misenhimer Park splash pad on Friday.

A review "identified gaps in our daily inspection program," Deputy City Manager Lemuel Randolph said. "Those gaps resulted in us not meeting our maintenance standards at our splash pads."

City officials say records from two of the four splash pads—at Don Misenhimer Park and the Beacon Recreation Center—show Parks and Recreation employees didn't consistently record, or in some cases did not conduct, the water quality testing that's required prior to the facilities opening each day.

City officials say a review of inspection logs at the Don Misenhimer splash pad found water chlorination readings weren't documented on two of the three dates that the child was there in late August and early September.

City officials say Arlington's drinking water supply was not affected, and that the splash pad is equipped with a backflow prevention device designed to isolate its water from the city's water distribution system.

The CDC says *Naegleria fowleri* infections are rare, with just 34 reported in the U.S. from 2010 to 2019. People are infected when water containing the amoeba enters the body through the nose, usually when people go swimming or diving in lakes and rivers.

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