



# News Release

Brazos River Authority

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*For Immediate Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Judi Pierce  
Public Information Officer  
(254) 761-3103**

## The Brazos River Authority advises lake and river swimmers of a potential health risk

The summer has arrived and many Texans are heading for their nearest lake or river to take in the sun and enjoy the water. Although the Brazos River Authority encourages people to take advantage of the relaxing and exciting activities associated with lakes and rivers, Texans should be aware of the potential health risks of swimming in or around stagnant water.

Each summer a small number of Texans are exposed to a microorganism that causes the fatal infection known as primary amebic meningoencephalitis or PAM. The ameba responsible for PAM thrives in warm, stagnant water and soil.

Texas Department of Health (TDH) officials say the combination of lower water levels, high water temperature and stagnant or slow moving water produces higher concentrations of the ameba in the water.

PAM infections for the past several years in Texas have involved children who had been swimming in lakes. The infection occurs when water containing the microorganism is forced into the nasal passages, either by jumping or diving into water or water skiing. Once inside the nasal passage, the ameba will make its way into the brain and spinal cord.

Symptoms of PAM include severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, seizures and hallucinations as the condition worsens. Though the disease is rare – affecting only about one to three people a year in Texas – for those affected, death usually occurs within a week. PAM is not spread from person to person.

The TDH recommends that people avoid stagnant or polluted water and take “No Swimming” signs seriously. People who choose to swim in fresh water or lakes should hold their noses or use a nose plug when jumping into the water.

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For more information, contact the Brazos River Authority at 254-761-3103 or the TDH Public Information Office at 512-458-7400.

***About the Brazos River Authority***

The Brazos River Authority, with headquarters in Waco, is the oldest river authority in Texas. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1929, the Authority's 42,000 square-mile territory includes all or part of 70 counties; extending from the Texas-New Mexico border west of Lubbock to the Gulf of Mexico near Freeport.

The Authority built, owns, and operates three reservoirs (Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury, and Limestone). In addition to these water supply reservoirs, the Authority contracts with the Corps of Engineers for the water supply storage space at eight Federal multi-purpose flood control and water conservation reservoirs (Lakes Whitney, Belton, Proctor, Somerville, Stillhouse Hollow, Granger, Georgetown and Aquilla).

The Brazos River Authority owns and operates a regional wastewater system for the cities of Temple-Belton. The Authority also operates wastewater treatment plants for Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System in Round Rock, and the cities of Hutto, Georgetown, Dime Box, Clute-Richwood and Sugar Land.

The Authority owns and operates water treatment systems at Lake Granbury (which supplies potable water to wholesale customers in Hood and Johnson Counties), the City of Taylor and the City of Dime Box. A potable water treatment plant located in Leander is owned jointly by the Lower Colorado River Authority and the Brazos River Authority. The Authority also engages in water quality monitoring activities throughout the Brazos River Basin.

For further information on the Brazos River Authority, please contact Judi Pierce, Public Information Officer at 254-761-3103.