



 Healthy Options that  
Promote Excellence

## Undercurrents: They Suck!

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**On a hot summer Louisiana day, we just want to “cool off”!** There are many small bodies of water in our residential areas across the parish and state. These may be small creeks, lakes, or small access points to rivers. While these areas look like a good place to cool off or swim, they can be extremely dangerous. Undercurrents, whether big or small, can lead to exhaustion, literally “sucking” you underwater, preventing you from making it back to shore. Also, injuries can occur from rocks and other hazards in the water or lead to drowning.

**Undercurrents are dangerous and are not always easily detected.** Undercurrents are often caused by temperature differences that occur in deep water, and can also be caused by weather; underground rivers or springs that empty into a large body of water; or the flow of water through manmade structures such as dams. Undercurrents can vary in size but are typically less than 100 feet wide.

Some things to look for when encountering various bodies of water where undercurrents may be present are:

1. Look for parts of the water that may be very still or have small waves.
2. Look for rippling water or a mass of water that appears to be a slightly different shade than the rest of the water around it.
3. In some undercurrents, you may see clumps of debris or streaks of mud or sand moving through the water, which is pulling the debris or mud along with it.

### SAFETY TIPS:

1. **Take a swimming class that offers basic life-saving tips and skills.**
2. **Wear a life vest.**
3. **Always look at the water before entering.**
4. **Talk to people who are familiar with the body of water where you want to swim.**

***Make Safety Your  
#1 Priority!***

**\*\*\*REMEMBER, ALL UNDERCURRENTS MAY NOT BE VISIBLE AND MAY BE STRONGER DEPENDING ON THE SEASON AND OTHER CLIMATE-RELATED FACTORS\*\*\***