

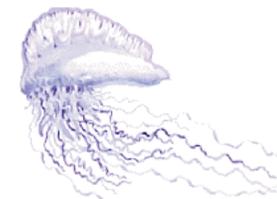
THINGS TO CONSIDER *BEFORE YOU SWIM*

What you need to know:

- **Weather and surf conditions** for the day. Storms, even though far offshore, can cause heavy/rough surf.
- **High and low tides** tell you when the surf is shallow or deep.
- **Swimming skill level**, yours and family members, as even excellent swimmers can exhaust themselves against strong currents. If skills are weak, make sure you can always touch the bottom!
- **Wind direction** signals the direction the surf/current is moving. If caught in deeper water, you can swim diagonally with the current toward shore.
- **Where other swimmers, family members, and children are at all times.** If they are in the water and winds are strong, the currents can sweep them in either direction quickly. **NEVER SWIM ALONE!**
- **Prescription medications and/or alcohol usage**, coupled with extensive time in the sun, can dramatically affect your ability to swim effectively.
- **How to handle a “rip current”** which is not always easy to spot. If you feel the surf pulling you away from the beach:
 - **DO NOT PANIC**
 - **SWIM PARALLEL TO THE BEACH, IN THE DIRECTION THE WIND IS BLOWING IF POSSIBLE, UNTIL YOU FEEL THE PULL RELEASE AND THEN SWIM DIAGONALLY TO SHORE.**



PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR



- **What they look like:** Man-of-wars are also known as bluebottles for their purple-blue color.
- **How to spot them:** They sit/float above the water and somewhat resembles an old warship at full sail. Beneath the water are long thin tendrils which can extend 165 feet (50 meters) in length below the surface, although 30 feet (10 meters) is more the average.
- **Affect to humans:** For humans, a man-of-war sting is excruciatingly painful, but rarely deadly. But **BEWARE** - even dead man-of-wars washed up on shore can deliver a sting.
- **First aid if stung by one:**
 - Clean any tentacles left on the skin by removing with a credit card or tongue depressor type of instrument. Be sure to use a gloved hand when removing tentacles.
 - Flush the area with vinegar to neutralize the toxins. For larger injured areas you may place a clean wash cloth or other clean cloth, over the area and then douse with vinegar.
 - Some people may have adverse and/or allergic reactions to the sting and go into anaphylactic shock. **911 SHOULD BE CALLED IMMEDIATELY.**

QUESTIONS CONCERNING INFORMATION IN THIS BROCHURE
SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

YOUR EMERALD ISLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
BEACH PATROL OFFICE
252-354-2445
EMERGENCIES DIAL 911

YOUR BEACH SAFETY AND ENJOYMENT IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY!