

Stay healthy when swimming



Healthy swimming guidelines

Many times, the water may look clean and safe when it contains dangerous germs or unsafe chemicals. Though proper chlorine levels are important, some germs are not killed by chlorine. Some water may be treated with too much chlorine or an improper balance that can make people sick. So what can you do to enjoy the water this summer and stay healthy?

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea or you've been vomiting. Even a tiny, invisible amount of germs can get in the water and make others sick.
- Never get swimming water in your mouth. Keep your mouth closed when underwater.
- Shower with soap before you swim and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Have your children wash their hands as well.
- Don't allow kids to play in fountains that haven't been treated with chlorine.
- Stop swimming at least once every hour for bathroom breaks and/or diaper changes. Use swim diapers on kids who aren't potty trained. Many kids will have "accidents" in the water if they don't get out to use the bathroom.
- Don't change diapers near the swimming area. Do it in a bathroom or away from the water.
- If you own a pool, check chlorine levels regularly. Use pool test strips to check for proper pH levels and chemical balances.
- Ask to see the last pool inspection report before swimming in a public pool or water park.

Did you know you can get sick from swimming? Whether it's a pool, hot tub, water park, fountain, lake, river or ocean, some water can have germs or chemicals in it that cause recreational water illness (RWI). And, the number of RWI outbreaks have increased steadily in the last 30 years.

RWIs can ruin summer fun

RWIs most often cause diarrhea, but they can make you sick in other ways too. They can also cause nausea and vomiting, skin rashes, and infections of the eyes, ears, skin and respiratory system.

Most healthy people will recover from RWIs, but they can be dangerous to pregnant women, young children, and people with weakened immune systems.



The germ that survives chlorine

Cryptosporidium, commonly called crypto, is a bacteria that can be spread in swimming water. Chlorine won't kill crypto, and people with weakened immune systems can get very sick from it. It can cause severe watery diarrhea and is a leading cause of RWIs. To avoid getting or spreading crypto, follow the healthy swimming guidelines on this page. It is not killed by hand sanitizer, so washing hands with soap and water is critical.