

A Clarity Pool & Spa Swimming Guide For You And Your Family!

This summer, swimming pools will be filled with millions of people having fun and staying cool. But, did you know that germs can contaminate swimming water even if it's treated with chlorine? Learning about recreational water illnesses (RWIs), which are spread by swimming in contaminated recreational waters such as swimming pool, water parks, lakes, and the ocean, can protect you from illness.



Swimming To Your Health

RWIs are caused by germs like "Crypto" (KRIP-toe, short for Cryptosporidium), Giardia (gee-ARE-dee-uh), E. coli 0157:h7, and Shigella (Shi-GE-luh) and are spread by accidentally swallowing water that has been contaminated with fecal matter. How does a pool get contaminated? You share the water with everyone in the pool. If someone with diarrhea contaminates the water (they do not need to have an "accident" to do this. Just getting in the water while sick can contaminate the water), swallowing the water can make you sick.

The great news is that germs causing RWIs are killed by chlorine. However, chlorine doesn't work right away. It takes time to kill germs and some germs like "Crypto" are resistant to chlorine and can live in pools for days. That is why even the best maintained water can spread illness. Therefore, healthy swimming behaviors are needed to protect you and your kids from RWIs and will help stop germs from getting in the pool in the first place. Here are six guides that promote healthy swimming:

- 1) Don't swim when you have diarrhea, especially when a child in diapers. You can spread germs in the water making other people sick.
- 2) Don't swallow the pool water. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth at all.
- 3) Practice good hygiene. It is best to take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.

If you have children in the pool...

- 4) Take your kids on bathroom breaks or change diapers often. Do not wait for them to ask to go.
- 5) Change diapers in a bathroom, not at the pool side. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and spread illnesses.
- 6) Wash your child thoroughly with soap and water before swimming.

The next page has further tips on ensuring health and safety with your service company.

What You Can Do To Ensure Your Pool Water Is Healthy!

In addition to the previous 6 tips to preventing RWIs in your pool, there are other things you can do as well to contribute to good health while swimming.

Inspect the maintenance of your pool...

Your pool water should be clean and clear. Cloudiness and algae are signs of chemistry imbalance or poor filtration. As for a dirty pool, this could be a sign of neglect by your service company, which means they may have also neglected your pool water's chemistry too.



Swimming To Your Health

You should also look for smooth pool sides (they and your tile should not be sticky or slippery), functional pool equipment, and no strong odors. A well chlorinated pool has little odor. A strong chemical smell indicates a maintenance problem.

Test your pool service technician's knowledge...

You might ask what kind of training your pool technician has had or how experienced they are. If they are new, are they continually being trained and observed? Do they have any certifications? You may also ask them what the chemistry levels have been like for your pool, or ask them technical questions about your pool to test their level of knowledge.

Actions you can take to keep your pool healthy...

Whenever you have children in the pool, always enforce your bathroom breaks. You can also let your pool technician know ahead of time if you are going to have a pool party. They can boost your pool's chlorine some and take other steps to prepare for the large user load. You can also test your water yourself randomly to confirm your pool's chemistry levels and that your pool technician is properly treating your pool.

Next we will discuss three Recreational Water Illnesses that are commonly asked about, and how to protect yourself from them.

Swimmer's Ear (Otitis Externa) - A RWI Found In Pools

What is Swimmer's Ear?

Swimmer's Ear (ear ache) is an infection of the ear and/or outer ear canal. It can cause the ear to itch or become red and inflamed so that head movement or touching of the ear is very painful. Pus may also drain from the ear.

What Causes Swimmer's Ear?

Swimmer's Ear is often caused by infection with a germ called *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. This germ is common in the environment (soil, water) and is microscopic so that it can't be seen with the naked eye. Although all age groups are affected by Swimmer's Ear, it is more common in children and young adults and can be extremely painful.

How is Swimmer's Ear spread?

Having contaminated water get in the ear can give people Swimmer's Ear. Swimmer's Ear usually occurs within a few days of getting contaminated water or placing contaminated objects in the ear.

Is there a difference between a childhood middle ear infection and Swimmer's Ear?

Yes. Swimmer's Ear is not the same as the common childhood middle ear infection. If you can wiggle the outer ear without pain or discomfort, then your ear infection is probably not Swimmer's Ear.

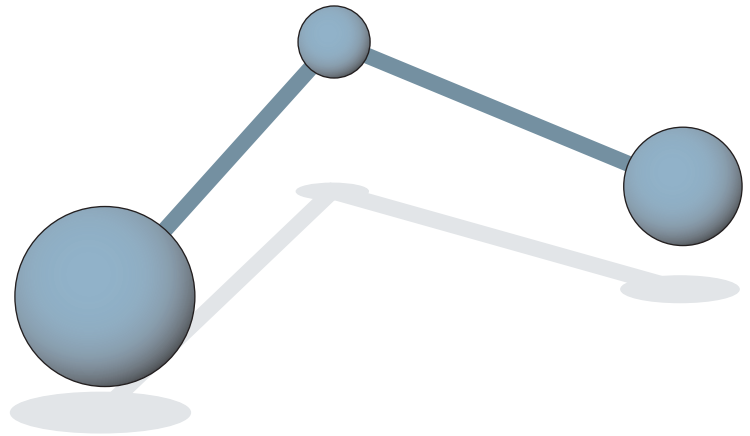
Healthy swimming tips to prevent Swimmer's Ear...

1) Dry your ears after swimming. If it is difficult to get water out of your ear, apply a few drops of an alcohol-based ear product into the ear.

2) Avoid putting objects in the ear (e.g. fingers, cotton swabs) that may scratch the ear canal and provide a site for infection.

3) Make sure your service company has good chlorine and pH levels maintained on your pool. This will kill off infections in the water.

If you think you have Swimmer's Ear, consult your health care provider. Swimmer's Ear can be treated with antibiotic ear drops.



Crypto (krip-TOE) - A RWI Found In Pools

What is Crypto?

Crypto is a germ that causes diarrhea. Crypto, short for Cryptosporidium, is found in infected people's stool and cannot be seen by the naked eye. This germ is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive for long periods of time and makes it resistant to chlorine disinfection found in pools.

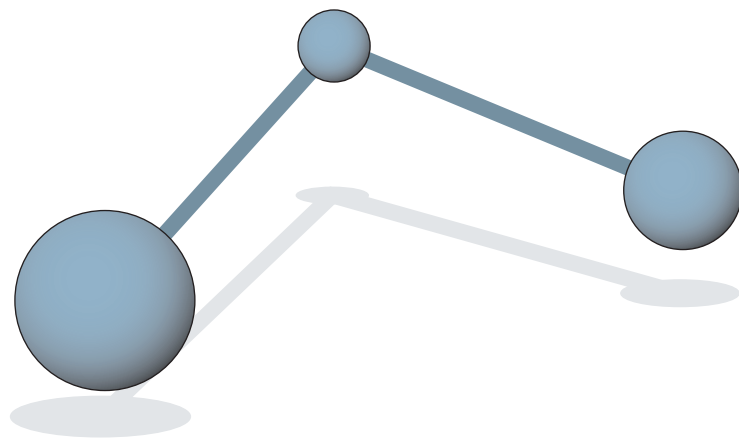
Why should I be concerned about Crypto?

During the past two decades, Crypto has become recognized as one of the most common causes of recreational water illness in the United States. The germ is found in every part of the United States and the world.

How is Crypto spread?

Crypto is NOT spread by contact with blood. Crypto can be spread by:

- 1) Swallowing recreational water (swimming pools, hot tubs...) contaminated with Crypto.
- 2) Putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of a person or animal infected with Crypto.
- 3) Swallowing Crypto picked up from surfaces (lounge chairs, picnic tables, bathroom fixtures...) contaminated with stool from an infected person.



How do I protect myself and my family?

Practice the six tips given on the first page of this brochure. Following these will help promote healthy swimming for you and your family.

Giardia (gee-ARE-dee-uh) - A RWI Found In Pools

What is Giardia?

Giardia is a germ that causes diarrhea. Giardia is found in infected people's stool and cannot be seen with the naked eye. This germ is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body and in the environment for long periods of time.

Why should I be concerned about Giardia?

During the past two decades, Giardia has become recognized as one of the most common causes of recreational water illness in the United States. The germ is found in every part of the United States and the world.

How is Giardia spread?

Giardia is NOT spread by contact with blood. Giardia can be spread by:

- 1) Swallowing recreational water (swimming pools, hot tubs...) contaminated with Giardia.
- 2) Putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of a person or animal infected with Giardia.
- 3) Swallowing Giardia picked up from surfaces (lounge chairs, picnic tables, bathroom fixtures...) contaminated with stool from an infected person.

How do I protect myself and my family?

Practice the six tips given on the first page of this brochure. Following these will help promote healthy swimming for you and your family.

