

Preventing Recreational Water Illnesses: Diarrhea

Strategies for Aquatics Staff



Properly maintaining pool facilities is critical to preventing the spread of recreational water illnesses (RWI) and educating swimmers about their role in prevention is just as critical. Posting signs around the facility is important, however, educating patrons before they arrive may have a bigger influence on their decision to swim that day.

The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea. Diarrheal illnesses can be caused by germs such as *Crypto*, short for *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, norovirus and *E. coli* O157:H7. Over the last two seasons, Columbus pools have experienced more than expected cases of Shigellosis and *Crypto*. We are asking pool operators to take a proactive approach to educating patrons about not swimming while ill with diarrhea.

The following information is valid for all types of pools, including but not limited to lap pools, recreation pools, spas, wading pools, diving pools and other specialized pools.

Educating Patrons Not to Swim with Diarrhea

Columbus Public Health recommends the following strategies to help inform your patrons about the importance of not swimming when ill with diarrhea.

1. Add information to your website with other pool information.

Example: Add a notice that pops up or a box on the page with pool/spa information saying:
"Anyone with diarrhea will not be allowed to use the pool." or
"Do not swim when you have diarrhea, it spreads illness."
Place it near the most popular information, like hours of operation.

2. Add a message to your voicemail/automated greeting.

Example: When a patron calls to check your hours or get pool information, add: "Remember not swim when you have diarrhea, it spreads illness" to your message.

3. Train staff to routinely inform patrons.

Train your staff to mention not to swim with diarrhea when patrons are asking about the pool/spa, whether in person or on the phone.

4. Add the message to all printed materials about your pool.

5. Post signs at the front desk, at the front door, and in the locker rooms.

Signs and posters are available to print from Columbus Public Health or CDC's website. Please see resources section below.

6. Include the information in your rules for pool party goers.

If your facility offers a space for pool parties, include the message in your rules for party goers. Add it to any policies, procedures or contracts you use for these events and ask staff to mention it when they are giving the paperwork.

Resources: Preventing Recreational Water Illness

Columbus Public Health – www.publichealth.columbus.gov

Posters

Sample messages

Columbus City Health Code

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming

Information for the public on all Recreations Water Illnesses (such as what are they, how do they spread, and why doesn't chlorine kill them?)

- [Brochures](#)
- [Fact Sheets](#)
- [Posters](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Messages to Use with Patrons

CDC's Six PLEA's To Keep Germs Out of the Pool

All Swimmers:

Please don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick. This is especially important for kids in diapers.

Please don't swallow the pool water. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth.

Please practice good hygiene. 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.

Parents of Young Kids:

Please take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.

Please change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and cause illness.

Please wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. Everyone has invisible amounts of fecal matter on their bottoms that ends up in the pool.

Source: CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/6_pleas.htm



CDC Healthy Swimming Posters —Samples

Help keep the pool clean



Please wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water *before* swimming.

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming



There are some things you would rather **NOT** share.

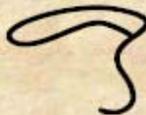


Shower before swimming.

Healthy Swimming

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming



WANTED 

Saggy Diapers
a.k.a. "Teabags"

- ✦ Wanted on suspicion of carrying poop
- ✦ Poop is guilty of using up chlorine in the pool that could be used for killing germs
- ✦ "Teabags" are wanted for disposal because poop is **NOT** wanted in our pool

Please check your child's diaper often



Priceless Reward!

If found on your child, please change diaper in a bathroom, *not* at poolside

Clean pool water and healthy swimming for the whole town

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming

You wouldn't drink the water you **bathe** in.



Why would you drink the water you **swim** in?

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming

These and more at www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming