

THE AQUATIC WATCH

Updates on Key Issues Facing the Aquatic Industry

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CDC Announces Third Annual National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week (January 2006)

The Center for Disease Control (the “CDC”) recently announced that the third annual National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week will be held from May 21, 2006 through May 27, 2006 (at the start of the summer swim season). Recreational water illnesses (“RWIs”) are illnesses commonly spread by swallowing, breathing or having contact with contaminated water from swimming pools. The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea caused by pathogens such as Cryptosporidium, Giardia, Shigella and Escherichia coli 0157:H7.

The bad news is that RWIs may cause various complications including skin, eye, ear, respiratory and neurological infections as well as death in individuals with weak immune systems. The good news is that by following a few simple steps, aquatic managers can significantly reduce the spread of germs that cause RWIs. According to the CDC, in order to reduce the risk of illness from RWIs, aquatic managers should:

- Ensure availability of trained operation staff during the weekends when pools are most heavily used.
- Test disinfectant levels and pH levels at least twice per day (hourly when in heavy use).
- Maintain free chlorine levels continuously between 1 and 3 parts per million and the pH level of the water at 7.2 to 7.8.
- Maintain filtration and recirculation systems according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Scrub pool surfaces (particularly tile) to remove any slime layer.
- Provide disinfection guidelines for fecal accidents and body fluid spills.
- Ensure adequate numbers of easily found, clean, close and safe restrooms and diaper changing areas.
- Implement large group orientations, particularly for young children and bathroom break policies to promote healthy swimming.

If you have further questions regarding RWIs and how they may impact your aquatic facility, you can visit the CDC’s RWI website at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming> or contact the staff of [Aquatic Watch, Inc.](http://www.aquaticwatch.com) at 724-772-9950 or management@aquaticwatch.com.