

THE AQUATIC WATCH

Updates on Key Issues Facing the Aquatic Industry

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SIX PLEAS FOR HEALTHY SWIMMING¹ (June 2006)

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 is treated with chlorine? Learning about recreational water illnesses (“RWIs”), which are spread by swimming in contaminated recreational waters such as swimming pools, waterparks, lakes and the ocean, can protect you from illness.

RWIs are caused by germs like Crypto (short for Cryptosporidium), Giardia, Escherichia coli 0157:H7 and Shigella 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, swallowing the water can make you sick.

The great news is that germs causing RWIs are killed by chlorine. However, chlorine does not always 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 pools can spread illness. Therefore, healthy swimming behaviors are needed to protect you and your children from RWIs and will help stop germs from getting in the pool in the first place. Here are six “PLEAS” that promote Healthy Swimming:

- **PLEASE** don’t swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for kids in diapers. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- **PLEASE** don’t swallow the pool water. In fact, avoid getting water your mouth.
- **PLEASE** practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- **PLEASE** take your kids on bathroom breaks or change diapers often. Waiting to hear “I have to go” may mean that it is too late.
- **PLEASE** change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and spread illness.
- **PLEASE** wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming.

Want to learn more about RWIs? Why you should not swim when ill with diarrhea? How some germs that cause RWIs can live for days in even the best-maintained pools? Go to www.healthyswimming.org for more information. Take the Healthy Swimming IQ Quiz and a quick look at what swimmers are asking this year.

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