



National Healthy and Safe Swimming Week – May 21-27, 2018

The week before Memorial Day has been designated **National Healthy and Safe Swimming Week**. This year's theme is "Swim Healthy. Stay Healthy." Each year, Healthy and Safe Swimming Week focuses on simple steps swimmers and pool operators can take to help ensure a healthy and safe swimming experience for everyone. It focuses on the role of swimmers, aquatics and beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials in preventing drowning, pool chemical injuries, and outbreaks of illnesses. It highlights swimmer hygiene and the need for swimmers to take an active role in helping to protect themselves and prevent the spread of germs.

Recreational Water Illnesses

Outbreaks associated with recreational water occur more frequently in the summer months. Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs) are caused by organisms spread through contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, water play areas, hot tubs, decorative water fountains, oceans, lakes, and rivers. RWIs can be a wide variety of infections, including gastrointestinal, skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic and wound infections. The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea. Diarrheal illnesses can be caused by germs such as *Cryptosporidium* (Crypto), *Giardia*, *Shigella*, norovirus, and *E. coli* O157:H7. These germs can live from minutes to days in pools and some of them are very resistant to chlorine. Diarrheal RWIs are spread by swallowing water that has been contaminated with fecal matter containing these organisms.

Crypto is the leading cause of swimming-pool related outbreaks of diarrheal illness. Additional information on the symptoms, treatment and how to prevent crypto can be found at the following link. http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/crypto_faq.pdf

Reporting

Individual cases of *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, and *E. coli* O157:H7 are reportable within 24 hours of diagnosis. Outbreaks of these diseases as well as outbreaks of norovirus, are immediately reportable to the local health department. Information on disease reporting can be found at the following link: <http://nj.gov/health/cd/reporting/>. When investigating cases and outbreaks, investigators should document details of any exposure to recreational water. Worksheets have been developed as a guide to assist disease investigators with interviewing cases, to obtain appropriate exposures and risk factors and to enter the information into the Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS). Worksheets can be found under disease information at <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/find.shtml>.

RWI outbreak response toolkits are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/public-health-professionals/outbreak-response.html>

Steps for Healthy Swimming

More information about RWIs and healthy swimming can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/steps-healthy-swimming.html>.