



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

HOCKING COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Prevent Recreational Water Illnesses--We're in it Together

Swimming is one of the most popular sports activities in the United States¹. Although swimming is a physical activity that offers many health benefits, pools and other recreational water venues are also places where germs can be spread and injuries can happen.

Recreational water illnesses (RWIs) are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs/spas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans.

Contrary to popular belief, chlorine and other disinfectants do not kill germs instantly. While most germs are killed within minutes, Crypto (short for *Cryptosporidium*) can live for days. Before they are killed, these germs can cause RWIs, such as gastrointestinal, skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic, and wound infections. The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea caused by germs such as Crypto, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, Norovirus and *E. coli* O157:H7. Swallowing just a mouthful of water that contains these germs can make you sick.

We all share the water we swim in, and we each need to do our part to keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy. To help protect yourself and loved ones from germs, here are a few simple and effective steps all swimmers can take each time we swim to keep the poop, germs, and pee out of the water:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- Shower with soap before you start swimming.
- Take bathroom breaks every 60 minutes.
- **Take children on bathroom breaks every 60 minutes or check diapers every 30–60 minutes.**
 - Change diapers in the bathroom or diaper-changing area and not at poolside where germs can rinse into the water.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- **Don't swallow the water you swim in**

For more information, contact the Health Department at 740-385-3030 ext. 2, visit our website at www.hockingcountyhealthdepartment.com or visit CDC's Healthy Swimming website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/>