



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

HOCKING COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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HOT TUB MAINTENANCE

Spas provide the perfect environment to relax and unwind and where everyday stresses can be left behind. This fact sheet is designed to provide basic information on the water treatment of hot tubs to prevent contracting a water-borne illness while bathing.

Because of the warm moist environment, hot tubs and whirlpool baths can provide an ideal breeding ground for a number of disease-causing organisms. One of these organisms is Legionella which can cause the sometimes fatal Legionnaire's disease. Pseudomonas and E-coli bacteria and the Hepatitis A virus can also thrive in an improperly maintained hot tub. Pseudomonas can cause severe skin rashes, eye and ear infections while e-coli can cause intestinal and urinary tract infections. These various micro-organisms can easily be controlled and eliminated by maintaining proper disinfectant levels.

To prevent water-borne illnesses, a disinfectant such as chlorine or bromine should be added and maintained in the water. In Ohio, all public spas are required to maintain a minimum residual of 2.0 parts per million (ppm) for both chlorine and bromine. These levels should be monitored routinely since disinfectants are used up over time. Inexpensive test kits with instructions are available from hot tub and swimming pool dealers. Adjust the disinfectant levels if necessary at least an hour prior to using the hot tub.

Since dirt, lotions, and chemicals can adversely affect the water chemistry, you may want to post signs recommending patrons to shower or bathe before using the hot tub. The tub should be drained and scrubbed with a bleach solution on a regular basis. The filters and pumping systems should also be cleaned and serviced on a regular basis.

Never place chlorine tablets in the strainers because this concentrated form of chlorine is very caustic and may cause serious skin irritation or burns. The water temperature should also be monitored so it never exceeds 104°F or 40°C.

For more information please contact the Hocking County Health Department Environmental Division at (740) 385-3030 ext. 2 or visit our website at www.hockingcountyhealthdepartment.com.