



## Greene County Public Health

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# Press Release

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## Healthy & Safe Swimming Week 2026

**GREENE COUNTY, OH**—Greene County Public Health (GCPH) officials want to remind families that the week before Memorial Day (May 18-24, 2026) is Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. Swimming is a fun, healthy way to stay physically active and spend quality time with family and friends. *Healthy and Safe Swimming Week* highlights the roles that swimmers, caregivers, aquatics, beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials play in preventing disease outbreaks, drowning, and pool chemical injuries.

The team at GCPH reminds everyone of the crucial role basic swimming and water safety skills training play in keeping children and adults safe around water.

## Don't Let Diarrhea Sink the Fun This Summer

### The key points

- Diarrhea is the most common illness linked to water we swim in (like pools and lakes).
- You can get diarrhea by swallowing water that has germs in it.
- Avoid spreading or getting diarrhea: Stay out of water when you have diarrhea, and don't swallow water you swim in.

When you go into a swimming pool, hot tub, splash pad, lake, river, ocean, or other water, you can swallow germs that cause diarrhea.

Diarrhea-causing germs include [Cryptosporidium \(Crypto\)](#), [Giardia](#), [Shigella](#), [norovirus](#), and [E. coli O157](#). These germs can survive in properly chlorinated water for minutes to days, depending on the germ.

### Exposure

***Swallowing even a little water can make you sick.***

If someone has a diarrhea accident in the water, millions of diarrhea-causing germs can get in the water. If you swallow even a small amount of that contaminated water, you can get sick.

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Germs can also get in the water from small amounts of poop rinsing off swimmers' bodies.

### ***Chlorine doesn't kill germs instantly***

Filters and disinfectants (chemicals like chlorine or bromine) in pools work together to help kill germs. Filters remove debris (such as leaves), which can use up the disinfectant in the water that is needed to kill germs.

Pool staff make sure chlorine or bromine is at the level needed to kill most germs in the water within minutes. However, you can still be exposed during the time it takes for the disinfectant to reach and kill the germs. You can also get diarrhea from germs that are hard to kill, such as Crypto.

### ***Some germs survive for over a week***

Crypto can stay alive for more than 7 days, even if pool water is properly disinfected. Crypto spreads easily and can make you sick with watery diarrhea for weeks.

### ***Germs can spread to multiple pools***

Facilities with multiple pools often use one filtration system for all the pools, causing water from multiple pools to mix. This means germs from one person's body could contaminate the water in more than one pool.

## **Prevention steps and strategies**

We all share the water we swim, play, or relax in. Each of us can help protect ourselves, our families, and our friends from germs that cause diarrhea. Take the following steps when swimming or playing in the water:

### **Do not**

- **Poop in the water**  
Germs from one accident can spread throughout the pool and make others sick.
- **Swallow the water**  
Swallowing even a small amount of water containing germs can make you sick.

### **Do**

- **Stay out if you are sick with diarrhea**  
If you have Crypto, don't go back in the water until 2 weeks after your diarrhea has completely stopped.
- **Rinse off before going in the water**  
A one-minute shower removes most of the dirt, sweat, and oils on your body that use up the pool chemicals needed to kill germs.
- **Take kids on bathroom breaks**  
Regularly take kids to the bathroom so they don't have to go in the water.

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
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- **Check diapers every hour**

Remember, swim diapers are not leak-proof. They can only delay poop germs from getting into the water for a few minutes. Change diapers away from the pool to help keep germs out of the water. Always wash your hands after.

**CONTENT SOURCE:**

[National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases \(NCEZID\)](#); [National Center for Environmental Health](#); [CDC](#)

For more information about Greene County Public Health, please call 937-374-5600 or visit the website at [www.greenecophoh.gov](http://www.greenecophoh.gov).

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