

## Recreational Water Illnesses: Did You Know...?

- Over 22,000 persons in the United States became ill following outbreaks of waterborne illnesses from 1991-2004.
- The most common of the recreational water illnesses is diarrhea, caused by a variety of germs. These germs include parasites (*Cryptosporidium* “Crypto” and *Giardia*), bacteria (*Shigella* and *E. coli*), and viruses (noroviruses).
- Swimming pool water becomes contaminated as germs in feces present on the skin of infected people are rinsed off into the water while swimming or if someone has a fecal “accident” in the pool. The pool water is shared by every swimmer.
  - ✓ On average, people have about 0.14 grams of feces on their bottoms.
  - ✓ The feces from a person with diarrhea can contain millions of germs.
  - ✓ A person swimming with diarrhea can easily contaminate a pool or water park.
  - ✓ These disease-causing germs can even be found in the feces of people that do not have diarrhea.
  - ✓ Diapers are not leak proof.
- Lakes, rivers, and other natural water sources can become contaminated with the germs from sewage, animal waste, water runoff following a rain, and from swimmers as described above. Remember, these natural water sources are not chlorinated.
- When the water becomes contaminated other swimmers become infected and sick when the germs in the water are swallowed.
- Chlorine does not kill all the germs instantaneously. Fortunately, chlorine does kill most waterborne germs in less than an hour however; Crypto can survive up to a week, even in a well-chlorinated pool.
- These simple rules can help ensure a safer swimming environment for everyone.

**Don't swim or allow your child to swim with diarrhea!**

**Don't swallow the water! In fact, avoid getting into your mouth!**

**Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the bathroom!**

**Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming!**

**Take your kids on frequent bathroom breaks or change diapers often!**

**Change diapers in a bathroom and not poolside!**