

# Diarrheal Illness in Recreational Water Employees: Information for Managers

## Recreational water illnesses

Recreational water illnesses are spread by swallowing or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, splash pads, and lakes. These illnesses can cause a variety of symptoms, but the most common is diarrhea.

Some illnesses that cause diarrhea or vomiting can be transmitted through the water to patrons and co-workers if employees work while ill.

## Managing employee illness

Managers can help stop the transmission of waterborne illnesses and prevent outbreaks from occurring by doing the following:

- Train employees to recognize the symptoms of waterborne illness.
- Inform employees of your employee illness policy. If you do not have a policy, institute one.
- Record all employee reports of illness on an employee illness log. Keep the log in a place that can easily be found by all managers and supervisors.
- Exclude ill employees from work while they have diarrhea or vomiting.
- Employees diagnosed with *Cryptosporidium* should not enter the water until 2 weeks after their symptoms have stopped. Alternate job duties may be given during this time.
- Have a plan in place to find substitutions for employees who are ill and cannot work.

## Employee responsibilities

Employees play an important role in keeping the water safe and healthy for everyone. Employees should:

- Know the symptoms of waterborne illness.
- Report any illness to management.
- Not work while ill with diarrhea or vomiting.

## Patron complaints

Patron complaints of illness may be reported to the MDH Foodborne and Waterborne Illness Hotline at 1-877-366-3455. MDH will contact the appropriate health department for follow-up.

## Preventing recreational water illnesses

Help keep the water safe and healthy for everyone by following these healthy swimming steps:

- Do not swim while you have diarrhea.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom.
- Shower (with soap) before you get in the water.
- Do not swallow the water.
- Encourage patrons and employees to also follow these healthy swimming steps!