

Diarrheal Illness in Recreational Water Employees

Recreational water illnesses

Recreational water illnesses (RWIs) 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.

Swimming while ill with diarrhea can easily contaminate the water, even if you don't have an accident. If someone swallows water that has been contaminated, he or she may become sick. Chlorine doesn't kill germs instantly, and some germs like *Cryptosporidium* are extremely resistant to chlorine and can survive in pools for days.

You can help prevent RWIs

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 co-workers to also follow these healthy swimming steps!

Employee responsibilities

It is important that we keep the water safe and healthy for everyone.

If you experience any symptoms of **vomiting** or **diarrhea**:

- Notify management.
- Do not work if you have diarrhea or vomiting. You should not return to work until symptoms have stopped.
- Contact your health care provider if you have any concerns about your health.

If you are diagnosed with the parasite *Cryptosporidium*

Cryptosporidium (often called "Crypto") is one of the most common RWIs.

If you are diagnosed with Crypto:

- Report the illness to management.
- Do not work while you have diarrhea.
- Do not enter the water (e.g., lifeguard, teach swim lessons) until 2 weeks after symptoms have stopped. In order to protect the health of others, it is important that people who have *Cryptosporidium* stay out of the water during this time. You may temporarily be given alternate work assignments that do not put patrons or co-workers at risk of getting sick.