



Healthy and Safe Swimming Week May 23-29, 2022

Date: May 23, 2022

Public Health Message Type: Alert Advisory Update Information

Intended Audience: All public health partners Healthcare providers Infection preventionists
 Local health departments Schools/child care centers ACOs
 Animal health professionals Other:

Key Points or Updates:

- (1) May 23-29, 2022 has been designated as [Healthy and Safe Swimming Week](#). This year's theme is [Staying Healthy and Safe in Splash Pads](#).
- (2) Individual cases of *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, and *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 are reportable within 24 hours of diagnosis. Outbreaks of these diseases as well as outbreaks of norovirus, are immediately reportable. All reports should be made to the local health department.
- (3) A waterborne illness outbreak occurs when two or more persons experience a similar illness and have exposure to the same water source and there is evidence that the water is the likely source of the illness.
- (4) Additional information about waterborne illnesses can be accessed on the NJDOH Waterborne Illness page at <https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/waterborne.shtml>.

Action Items:

- (1) When investigating illnesses associated with recreational water, disease investigators are reminded to ask the location and dates of exposure to recreational water and document within the Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS).
- (2) Cases should be interviewed with available case report forms and worksheets to obtain appropriate exposures and risk factors.

Contact Information:

- The Communicable Disease Service at (609) 826-5964 during business hours.

References and Resources

- NJDOH Waterborne Illness Page
<https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/waterborne.shtml>
- NJDOH Public Recreational Bathing
<https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/phfpp/prb/>
- CDC Healthy Swimming
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/>
- CDC HAB Associated Illness
<https://www.cdc.gov/habs/index.html>
- NJDEP HAB Information
<https://www.state.nj.us/dep/hab/>

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week highlights the roles that swimmers, parents, aquatics and beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials play in preventing disease outbreaks, drowning, and pool chemical injuries. Every year, CDC focuses on a different topic for Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. This year's theme is [Staying Healthy and Safe in Splash Pads](#).

CDC's [Healthy and Safe Swimming Communications Toolkit](#) is available to help public health professionals promote health and safe swimming through various outreach suggestions and communication channels.

Recreational Water Illnesses

Outbreaks associated with recreational water occur more frequently in the summer months. Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs) are caused by organisms spread through contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, splash pads, hot tubs, decorative water fountains, oceans, lakes, and rivers. RWIs can be a wide variety of infections, including gastrointestinal, skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic and wound infections. Diarrheal illnesses are most commonly reported and can be caused by organisms such as *Cryptosporidium* (Crypto), *Giardia*, *Shigella*, norovirus, and *E. coli* O157:H7. These organisms can live from minutes to days in pools and some of them are very resistant to chlorine. Diarrheal RWIs are spread by swallowing water that has been contaminated with fecal matter containing these organisms.

Cryptosporidiosis is the leading cause of swimming-pool related outbreaks of diarrheal illness. Additional information on the symptoms, treatment and how to prevent crypto can be found on the following page: <https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/crypto.shtml>

Additional information on waterborne illnesses, guidance documents and various other resources can be found on the [NJDOH Waterborne Illness](#)

Reporting

Individual cases of *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, and *E. coli* O157:H7 are reportable within 24 hours of diagnosis. Outbreaks of these diseases as well as outbreaks of norovirus, are immediately reportable to the local health department. Information on disease reporting can be found here <http://nj.gov/health/cd/reporting/> and your local health department can be found at the following link: <http://localhealth.nj.gov>. When investigating cases and outbreaks, investigators should document details of any exposure to recreational water in CDRSS. Worksheets and case report forms developed should be used when interviewing cases, to obtain appropriate exposures and risk factors and this information should be entered into the Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS). Worksheets and case report forms can be found under disease reporting on every disease page located at <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/>.

RWI outbreak response toolkits are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/public-health-professionals/outbreak-response.html>.

Cyanobacterial Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Related Illness

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) are the rapid growth of algae that can cause harm to animals, people, or the local ecology. In fresh water, such as lakes and rivers, harmful algal blooms are most commonly formed from cyanobacteria. Because of their color, they are often called blue-green algae. A HAB can look like foam, scum, or mats on the surface of water and can be different colors. HABs can produce toxins that can cause a variety of illnesses in people and animals. There are no symptoms specific to HAB associated illness and there are currently no available tests or special treatments for HAB associated illnesses. HABs can occur in warm fresh, marine, or brackish waters with abundant nutrients and are becoming more frequent with climate change.