

Pool of Knowledge

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Facts about Giardia and Swimming Pools

Giardia (gee-ARE-dee-uh) is a germ which causes diarrhea. This germ is found in the fecal matter of a person who has been infected by Giardia. Giardia is a common cause of recreational water illness (disease caused by germs spread through pool water) in the United States, which may cause prolonged diarrhea (for 1–2 weeks). Giardia's tough outer shell allows it to survive up to 45 minutes, even in properly chlorinated pools. Giardia is spread throughout the pool by contaminated fecal matter. People become infected by swallowing the contaminated pool water (even swallowing a small amount of water can make you sick). In public swimming areas, you share the water with everyone in it, including the germs. One person that is infected with Giardia and has diarrhea in the water can cause the water to become contaminated with millions of germs. In order to protect you and other swimmers from Giardia, take action! Due to the tough nature of the germ, preventing the germ from getting there is critical. Follow these recommended steps to prevent Giardia:



- Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea.
- Shower before you get in the water.
- Don't pee or poop in the water.
- Don't swallow the water.
- Take kids on bathroom breaks.
- Check diapers, and change them in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area—not poolside—to keep germs away from the pool.
- Check and ensure the chlorine and pH levels are adequate.
- Every hour—everyone out!

The Giardia fact sheet is available from the CDC and is in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Inspections of Public Swimming Places

Summer is approaching and that means inspectors from Environmental Health Services will be inspecting all public swimming places in San Bernardino County. Public swimming places include any public pools, spas, water parks, waterslides, lakes, and lagoons. Inspectors will be looking for possible health and safety hazards in and around the swimming area. For pools and spas, they will be testing the water for chlorine, pH, cyanuric acid, and clarity. Public swimming areas at lakes are tested for pH and bacterial counts. Additionally, public swimming places are inspected for basic safety issues such as fence and gate hazards, electrical and lighting hazards, water clarity, and other imminent health threats.

Did You Know?

The Division of Environmental Health Services is a proud member of the San Bernardino County Drowning Prevention Network. This coalition seeks to raise awareness about the



dangers of drowning, and works to promote safe water practices. The mission of the network is to keep San Bernardino County residents and visitors informed about local occurrences of drownings and to keep swimming safe. Members of the San Bernardino County Drowning Prevention Network include fire departments, law enforcement agencies, the county health department, child advocates, and local hospitals. To learn more about this coalition, please visit their website: www.sbdpn.org.

Stay Connected to DEHS with Social Media

Follow our social media sites to get the latest news on food safety and foodborne illness prevention, mosquito and vector control, pool safety and drowning prevention, and more!

Environmental Health Today



Salud Ambiental Para Hoy



If you have any questions or comments, please contact Scott Stanley, Health Education Specialist II at 800-442-2283 or Scott.Stanley@dph.sbcounty.gov.

We appreciate the effort you make to protect the public's health in our County.