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PREVENT DISEASE TRANSMISSION BY KNOWING DOS AND DON'TS WHEN USING POOLS



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Tampa, Fla. – When planning water-based fun be aware of microbes. The clean look of a swimming pool can be deceiving because the germs on the bodies of swimmers and fecal material can be in the water that cannot be seen.

Common germs found in swimming pool water include bacteria like E. coli, Salmonella, Campylobacter, noroviruses, and parasites. While chlorine can kill germs in swimming pools, it takes time for the chlorine to do its job. Swimming actions such as getting dunked, spitting water, or just taking a swallow of pool water can be infectious.

It can take more than an hour for pathogens to die in a properly treated and maintained pool. In the case of a parasite called Cryptosporidium, often called “crypto,” it can take over a week. Crypto is a microscopic parasite that causes the diarrheal disease cryptosporidiosis. Crypto is spread in places such as daycare settings, pools, or other settings where someone may come in contact with feces from a person or animal with the disease. More on [Crypto in Hillsborough County can be found here](#).

TIPS: Stay Safe from Pool Pathogens

Avoid waterborne illness by considering these pointers:

- Keep your mouth closed. Although it may be tough, try not to swallow pool water.
- Get clean before you go swimming. Whatever is on your body is going into the pool. If you have children, pay special attention to their behinds, since it is generally children under five that bring and dispense fecal material into pools. It is not just children though; many others have fecal material on their rear end that washes off in the water.
- Take a bathroom break every hour, and be sure children do too — even if they say they don't have to go. Change swim diapers routinely in the bathroom, not on the pool deck. Be sure to wash hands with soap and water after using the bathroom or changing diapers.

- If you have diarrhea, don't go swimming and avoid contact with anyone with chronic illness, or sexual practices that could result in oral exposure to feces. Wash hands often.
- Any water that could contain microscopic feces should be considered contaminated. Whether it is a lake, a swimming pool or hot tub, you and your family should remember to be clean when going in the water, and remember not to ingest pool water if possible. Try to make sure your day at the pool brings home only good memories — and not infections.

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