



# Healthy Swimming

## Healthy Swimming Home

# Steps for Healthy Swimming



We all share the water we swim in. That means each of us needs to do our part to help keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy. To help protect yourself and those you care about, here are a few easy and effective steps **all swimmers** can take each time we swim, play, or relax in the water.

### Before you get in

Pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds with proper chlorine or bromine levels and pH are less likely to spread germs. Injuries and drownings are less likely when trained staff and adequate safety equipment are present.

### Before you or those you care about get in the water, do your own mini inspection:



Check latest inspection results on state or local health department website or on-site.



Make sure the drain at the bottom of the deep end is visible. Check that the drain covers appear to be secured and in good condition.



Use **test strips** to make sure the water has a proper free chlorine (amount of chlorine available to kill germs) or bromine level and pH.

- Free chlorine level: at least 1 part per million (ppm) in pools and water playgrounds and at least 3 ppm in hot tubs.
- Bromine level: at least 3 ppm in pools and water playgrounds and at least 4 ppm in hot tubs.
- pH (affects how effectively germs are killed or inactivated): 7.2–7.8.
- Most superstores, hardware stores, and pool supply stores sell test strips. Follow the manufacturer’s directions to ensure proper usage.



Check for lifeguard(s):

- If on duty, the lifeguard(s) should be focused on swimmers and not distracted.
- If no lifeguard is on duty, find the location of the safety equipment, such as a rescue ring or pole.



Make sure no chemicals are out in the open.



Check Out Healthy and Safe Swimming! [PDF – 1 page]

## Check yourself



Stay out of the water if you are sick with diarrhea. If you have been diagnosed with [Crypto](#), don't go back in the water until 2 weeks after diarrhea has completely stopped.



Stay out of the water if you have an open cut or wound (particularly from a surgery or piercing). If you do go in the water, use waterproof bandages to completely cover the cut or wound.



Shower before you get in the water. Rinsing off in the shower for just 1 minute removes most of the dirt or anything else on your body that uses up chlorine or bromine needed to kill or inactivate germs.

## Once you are in



Don't pee or poop in the water.



Don't swallow the water.



Use well-fitting, Coast Guard-approved [life jackets](#), not air-filled toys (for example, water wings), for flotation assistance.



Keep an eye on children at all times. Kids can drown in seconds and in silence.



Take kids on bathroom breaks and check diapers every hour.

- Change diapers away from the water to keep germs from getting in.



Dry ears thoroughly after swimming.

## If you are at an ocean, lake, or river:



Check for beach or lake closure information on your state or local government website or signs on-site.



Cloudy water can be a warning that there are more germs in the water than normal.



Stay out if you see any pipes draining into or around the water.



[Wash your hands for 20 seconds](#) before eating food, especially if you have been playing in or touching sand. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer might not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy, so wiping sand off before using it might be helpful.

## More Information

- [Hot Tubs](#)

- [Pool and Hot Tub Test Strips](#)
- [Splash Pads](#)
- [Swim Diapers](#)
- [Breastfeeding in Pools and Hot Tubs](#)
- [Swimming-related Illnesses](#)
- [Drowning, Injury, and Sun Protection](#)
- [Oceans, Lakes, and Rivers](#)

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