



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Avoid Water Illnesses – Swim Safely

**Eau Claire, WI, July 3, 2019** – Swimming and other water activities are a fun way to spend summer days and stay cool in this hot weather! Unfortunately, the water can contain germs that make you sick. Knowing how germs get into the water and how to avoid them will help make your water activities fun and safe.

“Most of the germs are brought into the water by people experiencing illness, animals, or wastewater runoff,” explains Allison Gosbin, public health nurse. “Diarrheal illnesses and swimmer’s ear are two of the most common conditions.”



**More than 1 in 5 adults don’t know that swimming when you are sick with diarrhea can make an entire swimming pool unclean.** You don’t have to have an accident to make the pool unclean. Germs can be on an ill swimmer’s bottom and rinse off as they are in the water. When these germs mix with pool water, other swimmers can become sick.

Even if a pool is well-maintained, swimmers may come in contact with the germs. It takes time for the water to recycle through the filters and chlorine to kill the germs in the water. Some germs are very tolerant to chlorine and chlorine may not kill them. Bodies of water such as rivers and lakes do not have chlorine or disinfectant. Therefore, germs are often able to live longer.

### You can take steps to prevent waterborne diarrhea:

- Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea.
- Don’t swallow or allow water to enter your mouth.
- Shower before you get in the water.
- Don’t pee or poop in the water.
- Wash your hands before eating after you have been in the water.

If water stays in the ear canal, germs in that water can grow in the ear and cause otitis externa – swimmer’s ear. This condition causes redness, swelling, and itchiness that is painful. It is more common in children. **The best prevention for swimmer’s ear is to dry your ears well when you are done swimming.**

For more information on water illnesses, see <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/swim-healthy.html>

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