

Ocean In Motion

Volume 3, Issue 3

Summer 2006

OCEAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Safe Swimming

Every year, millions of people visit “recreational water” sites, such as swimming pools, water parks, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, or the ocean.

Over the past century, the use of modern disinfection systems in pools and environmental improvements in our lakes, rivers and oceans, has improved the quality of recreational water. Despite this, there has been an increase over the past decade in the number of outbreaks of illness associated with swimming.

You will find information below to help keep you and your family safe and healthy this summer season:

What are recreational water illnesses (RWI's)?

RWI's are illnesses that are spread by swallowing, breathing or having contact with contaminated water from swimming pools, spas, lakes, rivers or oceans. Recreational water illnesses can cause a wide variety of symptoms including skin, ear, respiratory, eye and wound infections. The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea. Diarrheal illnesses can be caused by germs such as *Crypto*, short for *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella* and *E. Coli 0157:H7*.

How are RWI's Spread?

If swimmers are ill with diarrhea, the germs that they carry can contaminate the water if they have an “accident” in the pool. When people are ill with diarrhea, their stool can contain millions of germs. Therefore, swimming when ill with diarrhea can easily contaminate large pools or waterparks. In addition, lakes, rivers and the ocean can be contaminated by sewage spills, animal waste and water runoff following rainfall. If someone sick swallows water that has been contaminated, he/she may become sick. Many of the diarrhea-causing germs do not have to be swallowed in large amounts to cause illness.

Other RWI's (eye, skin, ear, and respiratory infections) are caused by germs that live naturally in the environment (water, soil). If disinfectant is not maintained at the appropriate levels, in the pool or hot tub, these germs can increase to the point where they can cause illness when swimmers breathe or have contact with contaminated water.

Why doesn't chlorine kill these RWI germs?

Chlorine in swimming pools does kill the germs that may make people sick, but it takes time. Chlorine in properly disinfected pools kills germs that can cause RWI's in less than an hour. Chlorine takes longer to kill some germs such as *Crypto*, which can survive for days in a properly disinfected pool. Bromine and PH levels also must be maintained at proper levels. Please contact your local pool supply store for more information on proper chlorine, bromine and PH levels.

Where are RWI's found?

In addition to swimming pools, swimming in contaminated hot tubs, oceans, lakes, rivers and playing in decorative water fountains can also spread RWI's.

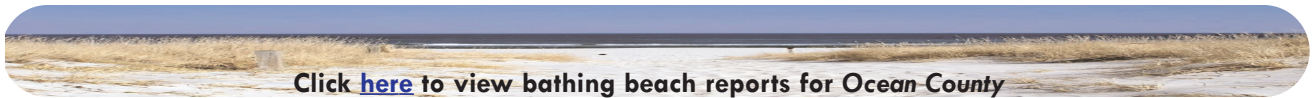
Definitions of terms:

(click on links for more information)

- [Chlorine](#)
- [Cryptosporidium](#)
- [E. coli](#)
- [Eye, skin, ear infections](#)
- [Giardia](#)
- [Healthy swimming behaviors](#)
- [Hot-tub rash](#)
- [Shigella](#)
- [Swimmer protection](#)

More Information

- [Detailed information on Cryptosporidium](#)
- [Fact sheet for people with chronic diarrhea](#)
- [Recommendations for people infected with HIV](#)



Click [here](#) to view bathing beach reports for Ocean County

View past issues by clicking here or visit www.ochd.org/oim

Ocean County Health Department

175 Sunset Avenue
Toms River, NJ 08755

Joseph J. Przywara
Public Health Coordinator

John Clayton
Editor

Phone: (732) 341-9700
(800) 342-9738

Fax: (732) 341-4467

E-mail: info@ochd.org

Website: www.ochd.org

Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Gerry P. Little
Freeholder Director
Board of Health Liaison

John C. Bartlett
Freeholder Deputy Director

John P. Kelly

James F. Lacey

Joseph H. Vicari

Ocean County Board of Health

John J. Mallon
Chairman

Robert Singer
Vice Chairman

Arlyne J. Rehak
Secretary-Treasurer

Carmen Amato, Jr.

Veronica Laureigh

Steven L. Pollock

William Ritchings

Patricia Seeber

Warren Wolf

BBQ Tips



To protect yourself, your family and friends from foodborne illness, practice safe food handling techniques when eating outdoors. Keep these tips in mind when preparing, storing and cooking food for picnics and barbecues:

- Food safety begins with hand washing when cooking outdoors.
- Keep cold food cold. Place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be held at or below 40°F.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter or outdoors. Do not reuse marinade.

- Cook food thoroughly (use a thermometer to be sure):

Beef/Veal/Lamb

145°F (Medium rare)

160°F (Medium)

170°F (Well done)

Ground Pork/Beef (160°F)

Ground Poultry (165°F)

Poultry breasts (170°F)

Whole Poultry (180°F)

Fin fish (145°F or until the flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork).

Shrimp, lobster and crabs (Meat should be pearly and opaque).

Clams, oysters and mussels (Shells must open).

- Do not let perishable food sit out longer than 2 hours.

UV Index Scale

2 or Less: Low

Low danger from the sun's UV rays for the average person.

Wear sunglasses on bright days, if you burn easily, use sunscreen.

3-5: Moderate

Moderate risk of harm from unprotected exposure.

Take precautions, such as covering up, if you will be outside.

Stay in shade near midday when the sun is strongest.

6-7: High

High risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure. Apply a sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15. Wear a wide-brim hat and sunglasses to protect your eyes.

Protection against sunburn is needed.

Reduce time in sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

8-10: Very High

Very high risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure.

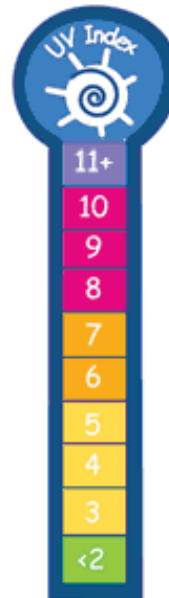
Minimize sun exposure, apply sunscreen (at least SPF 15) liberally and wear protective clothing and sunglasses.

11+: Extreme

Extreme risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure.

Try to avoid sun exposure during midday hours (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) and apply sunscreen (at least SPF 15) liberally every 2 hours.

Take all necessary precautions (seek shade, cover up, wear a hat and sunglasses and use sunscreen).



To find the UV index rating in your area, please click on the link below:

www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html#lookup

Then type in your Zip Code.