

Out of the Pool

Recreational Water Illnesses at a Glance

	Pathogen	Type	Method of transmission	Symptoms	Incubation rates	Chlorination time
	Cryptosporidium	Parasite	Swallowing contaminated water. Is very contagious, through people-to-people contact.	Dehydration, weight loss, stomach cramps, fever, nausea, vomiting. No treatment.	2 to 12 days	About 9,600 minutes (6.7 days)
	Escherichia coli (E. coli)	Bacteria	Swallowing contaminated water	Severe bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, kidney failure. Antibiotics available.	3 days	Less than one minute
	Giardiasis	One-celled parasite	Swallowing contaminated water. Cysts can survive in cold water for months.	Diarrhea, gas, greasy stools, stomach cramps, upset stomach, nausea. Prescription drugs available.	1 to 2 weeks	About 45 minutes
	Hepatitis A	Virus	Swallowing water contaminated with feces infected with virus	Jaundice, fatigue, stomach pain, loss of appetite, nausea, diarrhea, fever. No real treatment. Vaccine available.	2 weeks to 6 months	About 16 minutes
	Legionnaires' disease/Pontiac Fever	Bacterium Legionella pneumophila	Breathing mists from hot tubs infected with the bacteria. Not contagious.	Fever, chills, cough, muscle aches, headache, fatigue, diarrhea, kidney malfunction. Legionnaires' treatable.	2 to 14 days	Less than one minute
	Naegleria Infection	Microscopic amoeba	Enters through nose and travels to brain and spinal cord. Feeds on brain tissue. Very rare infection.	Causes primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM), a brain inflammation. Drugs available; high fatality rate.	3 to 7 days	Less than one minute
	Norovirus Gastroenteritis	Virus	Swallowing water contaminated with stool carrying the virus. Very contagious.	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramping, fever, chills, muscle aches, fatigue. Most recover in 1-2 days.	1 to 2 days	About 30 minutes to an hour
	Pseudomonas Dermatitis (Hot Tub Rash)	Bacteria	Direct skin contact with contaminated water. Usually in hot tubs, but also in pools.	Itchy skin, red rash, blisters around hair follicles. Clears up on its own within a few days.	8 hours to 5 days	Less than one minute
	Salmonellosis	Bacteria, Salmonella	Swallowing water contaminated with bacteria	Diarrhea, fever, cramps. Antibiotics if infection spreads from intestines; no necessary treatment otherwise.	1 to 3 weeks	Less than one minute
	Shigellosis	Bacteria Shigella	Swallowing water contaminated with bacteria	Bloody diarrhea, fever, cramps. Antibiotics, though forms of shigella have become resistant.	12 to 15 hours	Less than one minute

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION