



Press Release

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Pool Inspection Data Show Need for Improvement CDC Urges People to Take an Active Role in Promoting Healthy Swimming

About 1 out of 8 public pool inspections conducted in 13 states in 2008 resulted in pools being closed immediately due to serious code violations, according to a report released today by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

The report found that, overall, inspections of child care facility pools had the highest percentage of immediate closures (17.2 percent), followed by inspections of hotel/motel pools (15.3 percent), and apartment/condo pools (12.4 percent). Inspections of kiddie/wading pools (13.5 percent) and interactive fountains (12.6 percent) had the highest percentage of disinfectant violations. Improper disinfectant and pH levels in the water can result in transmission of germs, such as [Shigella](#) and [norovirus](#), which cause [gastroenteritis](#).

Entitled, "Violations Identified from Routine Swimming Pool Inspections – Selected States and Counties, United States, 2008," the report is published in this week's issue of CDC's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#).

To assess pool code compliance, researchers analyzed data from 121,020 [routine pool inspections](#) conducted by a convenience sample of 15 jurisdictions across 13 states. Because pool codes and inspection items differed across jurisdictions, reported denominators varied. Of 111,487 inspections, 13,532 (12.1 percent) identified serious violations that threatened the public's health and resulted in immediate pool closure.

Although public health professionals regularly inspect public pool facilities to make sure that steps are taken to promote healthy and safe swimming, these inspections are only one part of the solution to prevent illnesses linked to recreational water.

"Pool inspections are vital to helping state and local government pool programs keep swimmers healthy and safe, but pool inspectors can't be at every pool every day. It's important for people to play an active role in protecting their own health when they swim," said Michele Hlavsa, chief of the [Healthy Swimming Program](#) at CDC. "By working together, we can decrease the risk of illness and make sure swimming is not only fun, but healthy too."



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To help ensure healthy swimming each time, CDC encourages swimmers to take action by following the Triple A's of Healthy Swimming: Awareness, Action, and Advocacy.

- Awareness
 - Learn about [recreational water illnesses \(RWIs\)](#)

- Action
 - Follow the Six Steps for Healthy Swimming:
 - Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
 - Don't swallow pool water.
 - Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
 - Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often.
 - Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside.
 - Wash your children thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before they go swimming.
 - Check pool water quality yourself using test strips purchased at a local store.
 - Ask the pool operator about chlorine and pH levels and the latest pool inspection score. The pH is probably the most important factor in swimming pool water and should be tested and adjusted on a weekly basis. Measuring the pH level is a way to assess the relative acidity or alkalinity of the pool water. pH is measured on a scale of 1 to 14 where 1 is extremely acidic and 14 is extremely alkaline. A pH reading of 7.0 is neutral - below 7.0 is acidic - above 7.0 is alkaline.

- Advocacy
 - Encourage pool operators to take steps shown to kill the germs that cause (RWIs)
 - Educate other swimmers about RWIs to promote healthy swimming.

RWI Prevention Week 2010: Pool Inspections and the Triple A's of Healthy Swimming

This report and the Triple A's of Healthy Swimming recommendations are presented in conjunction with [RWI Prevention Week](#) (May 24 - 30, 2010). The goal of RWI Prevention Week is to raise awareness about healthy swimming, including ways to prevent RWIs. RWIs are spread by swallowing, breathing in the mists or aerosols from, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, hot tubs, interactive fountains, water play areas, lakes, rivers, or oceans.

This year marks the sixth anniversary of RWI Prevention Week, which is celebrated each year during the week before Memorial Day. To view the pool inspection report, please visit www.cdc.gov/MMWR.



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For more information on healthy swimming, call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming. For information on how to order a free pool test strip visit, www.healthypools.org/freeteststrips

For general information about healthy swimming, please visit your state's website at www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/states/ or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's beaches website at www.epa.gov/beaches

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