



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Summer Swimming Safety

Outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis Associated with a Splash Park — Idaho, 2007

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

A trip to a splash park or pool with the kids can be a great way to spend a hot summer day. But several waterborne illnesses can be lurking in public swimming areas.

Dr. Randall Nett is an epidemiologist with CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service. He's joining us by phone today to discuss ways to avoid waterborne illnesses at pools and water parks. Welcome to the show, Randy.

[Dr. Nett] Thank you very much for having me, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Randy, how common are outbreaks of waterborne illnesses at water parks, or splash parks?

[Dr. Nett] Actually, probably more common than we realize. Several splash park outbreaks have been reported to CDC. However, some children do not develop illness until a few days after visiting the splash park, which can make it difficult for parents and healthcare providers to recognize that the splash park was actually the source of the child's illness. So it is likely that not all splash park outbreaks are reported to public health.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, what are the primary causes of these outbreaks?

[Dr. Nett] Outbreaks at splash parks are often caused by children with diarrheal illness having fecal accidents that go unnoticed. Should fecal material get into the splash park water, and the water is not properly cleansed or disinfected, then the water can make other children ill when they unintentionally, or even intentionally, drink the water.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the most common symptoms of a waterborne illness?

[Dr. Nett] It depends on the specific illness, but most waterborne illnesses result in diarrhea, and sometimes nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and body aches.

[Dr. Gaynes] Randy, what steps are water park operators required to take to prevent waterborne illnesses?

[Dr. Nett] Actually, in the majority of states, splash parks are not regulated, so operators do not have any such requirements. However, we do recommend that splash park operators, before even

building the splash park, consult with industry colleagues and local public health authorities and have their building plans reviewed to ensure the park will be a safe place to play. Operators should also install additional disinfection technology, such as ultraviolet lights, which can help kill *Cryptosporidium*, an organism that is resistant to normal levels of chlorine.

[Dr. Gaynes] What precautions should people take to avoid getting sick from a day at the pool or water park?

[Dr. Nett] When parents take their young child to a pool or splash park, they can look out for their child's safety and other children's safety by following these simple guidelines. First, by not allowing any child suffering from diarrhea to enter the pool or splash park, by washing their child's bottom with soap and water before entering the pool or splash park, by taking their child on frequent bathroom breaks, by encouraging their child not to drink the water, and finally, by washing their child's hands after pool or splash park play and before eating.

[Dr. Gaynes] Randy, where can listeners get more information about avoiding waterborne illnesses?

[Dr. Nett] We encourage all parents who will be taking their children to the splash park or pool to go to www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming, which includes links to resources in each state.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Randy. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Randall Nett about ways to avoid getting sick after a day at the pool or water park.

Remember parents, following a few simple precautions can keep your family and others safe in public swimming areas. Persons with diarrhea shouldn't play in the water, only change diapers in designated areas, shower with soap, wash your child's bottom well before getting into the water, and don't drink the water you play in.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.