

Ask CDC

It's OK to Go in the Water

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

Welcome to *Ask CDC*, the weekly podcast that answers *your* questions. I'm your host, Susan Laird.

Our question this week is from a mom who wants to know how she can keep her kids healthy if they go to a pool or water park.

A trip to a pool or water park with the kids can be a great way to spend a hot summer day. But swimmers can bring germs into the water, and it takes time for chlorine to kill these germs. A person with diarrhea can contaminate the water with fecal matter. If other swimmers swallow that water they can get diarrhea, too. One parasite — *Cryptosporidium*, or Crypto for short — causes most U.S. outbreaks of diarrhea linked to pools and water parks. This is because Crypto is not very susceptible to chlorine.

Here are some steps all swimmers can take to help protect themselves and other swimmers:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea; you can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- Don't swallow pool water; avoid getting water in your mouth.
- 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.

These are some steps parents can take to protect the health of their kids and other swimmers:

- Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean it's too late.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or diaper-changing area, not poolside. Germs can spread in and around the pool.
- Wash your children thoroughly with soap and water, especially their bottoms, before swimming. Invisible amounts of fecal matter can end up in the pool.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. On this website you'll find additional proactive healthy swimming steps, such as

- How to check the chlorine level yourself before getting in the water,
- What questions to ask the pool operator, and
- Educating other swimmers.

Thanks for listening. To submit *your* question to *Ask CDC*, email us at askcdc@cdc.gov.

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