

Fact Sheet — March 2010

Vomit and Blood Contamination of Pools and Spray Grounds Protection Against Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs)

This Fact Sheet is consistent with CDC's Healthy Swimming recommendations. For more information go to www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/.

The most common germs spread through recreational water are germs that cause diarrheal illnesses and skin rashes. These are spread by swallowing water contaminated with feces or by skin exposure to contaminated water. Coming in contact with blood in recreational water is unlikely to spread illness.

Vomit in Pool or Spray Ground Water

Vomiting while swimming appears to be a common event. Often, vomiting is a result of swallowing too much water and, therefore, the vomit is probably not infectious. However, if the full contents of the stomach is vomited, follow the guidance in these Q & As:

Q: What germs are likely to be spread by vomit?

A: Noroviruses (also known as Norwalk-like viruses).

Q: Assuming that norovirus is in the vomit, what should I do?

A: Respond to the vomit accident as you would respond to a formed fecal accident, using the recommendations found in the NYSDOH Fact Sheet "Fecal Incident Response Recommendations for Pool and Spray Ground Staff" (www.nyhealth.gov/environmental/outdoors/swimming). The time and chlorine level combinations needed to kill noroviruses and *Giardia* are similar. Since killing *Giardia* is the basis of CDC's formed fecal accident response recommendations, this protocol should be adequate for disinfecting a potentially infectious vomit accident.

Blood in Pool or Spray Ground Water

Germs (e.g., Hepatitis B virus or HIV) found in blood are spread when infected blood or certain body fluids get into the body and bloodstream (e.g., by sharing needles and by sexual contact). CDC is not aware of any of these germs being transmitted to swimmers from a blood spill in a pool or spray ground.

Q: Does chlorine kill the germs in blood?

A: Yes. These germs do not survive long when diluted into properly chlorinated recreational water.

Q: Swimmers want something to be done after a blood spill. Should the pool or spray ground be closed for a short period of time?

A: There is no public health reason to recommend closing the pool or spray ground after a blood spill. However, some staff choose to do so temporarily to satisfy patrons.

