Recreational Water Illnesses

A Recreational Water Illness (RWI) is an illness that comes from contact with contaminated water.

RWIs can be transmitted in waterparks, swimming pools, hot tubs and spas, rivers, lakes, and oceans. Diarrhea is the most common symptom of an RWI, but they can also cause infections in the skin, ears, eyes, chest and lungs.

These illnesses are most commonly spread through swallowing or breathing in water particles containing germs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all swimmers follow the "PLEAs" that promote safe, healthy swimming.

- Please do not swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick. This is especially important for children in diapers.

- Please do not swallow the pool water. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth altogether.

- Please practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.

- Please go on bathroom breaks often. Waiting until you have to go may mean that it is too late.

Parents:

- Please take kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear “I have to go” may mean that it is too late.

- Please change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper changing area that is not poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and cause illness.

- Please wash your child thoroughly (especially their bottoms) with soap and water before swimming. There could be invisible amounts of fecal matter on their bottoms that may end up in the pool.