



## Quick Facts

- Recreational water illnesses like those that cause diarrhea can spread person to person especially if swimmers swallow contaminated water. Symptoms may not begin for a week or more after swimming. Illnesses could be severe enough to cause hospitalization.
- The ameba *Naegleria fowleri* is found in warm freshwater during periods of high water temperatures and low water levels. The ameba enters the nose and travels quickly to the brain. Symptoms may occur within one to seven days and starts with headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, and stiff neck. It does not spread person to person.

**Seek medical attention if you or someone you know develops symptoms after swimming in freshwater.**

## Safe Swim Tips

- Keep an eye on your children at all times, drowning can occur in seconds and in silence
- Consider swim lessons or CPR classes for yourself or family members
- Waterwings & noodles are fun toys, but do not use in place of U.S. Coast Guard approved floatation devices
- Don't swim alone or for long periods of time
- Watch the weather for approaching storms
- For emergencies call 911 and seek help from lifeguards where available

### For more information:

Healthy swimming web page at:  
[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming)

Fact sheet on *Naegleria fowleri* and primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM):  
[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/naegleria/naegleria.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/naegleria/naegleria.pdf)



**About *Naegleria***

Swimmer's Itch: [www.cdc.gov/parasites/swimmersitch/faqs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/swimmersitch/faqs.html)

Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment  
651-430-6655



[www.co.washington.mn.us/specialtopics](http://www.co.washington.mn.us/specialtopics)  
[PHE@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:PHE@co.washington.mn.us)

# Safe Swim Season

Protect yourself and others against recreational water illnesses



Department of Public Health and Environment

[www.co.washington.mn.us](http://www.co.washington.mn.us)



## Think health and safety for the swim season

Many people have become sick from germs found in contaminated swimming areas.

Recreational water illnesses are caused by germs that can contaminate swimming areas including freshwater lakes, pools, and rivers. The most common symptom of recreational water illness is diarrhea caused by germs like *cryptosporidium*.

Another germ, *Naegleria fowleri* is an amoeba that lives in warm, stagnant water. It causes a very rare fatal brain infection called primary amoebic meningoencephalitis or PAM.

## Practice these steps to protect yourself and others from recreational water illnesses:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea
- Keep your head out of the water, use nose clips or hold your nose shut
- Don't swallow pool, lake, or river water
- Practice good hygiene such as showering with soap before and after swimming
- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet or changing diapers
- Take children on bathroom breaks or change diapers often
- Change diapers in a bathroom, not at poolside or beachside
- Avoid stirring up sediment in shallow freshwater areas
- Don't swim or submerge your head in stagnant warm bodies of water when air temperatures are high and water levels are low
- Follow beach, lake and pool safety rules when posted

