

Pool Chemical Safety: *Protect Yourself from Injuries*



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Swimming is the second most popular sports activity in the United States, with hundreds of millions of swimming visits each year. To help protect swimmers' health, pool chemicals are added to the water at aquatic venues, such as pools, water parks, and interactive fountains. These chemicals are used to stop bacteria, viruses, and parasites from spreading from one person to another. However, when not safely handled, these same chemicals that help protect us from germs can cause injuries.

According to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), preventable injuries associated with pool chemicals lead to as many as 5,200 emergency department visits each year. These injuries typically occur during the summer swim season, from Memorial Day to Labor Day. During 2007, almost half of these injuries occurred at a residence.

Individuals can be injured if they inhale fumes while opening pool chemical containers, attempting to pre-dissolve pool chemicals, or handling them unsafely. Injuries may also occur if chemicals are splashed into the eyes. It is important to remember that these types of injuries are not limited to those who handle chemicals; swimmers and others in the surrounding area may also be injured.

Public pool operators and residential pool owners can protect themselves and others by taking these key steps:

ALWAYS:

- secure pool chemicals away from children and animals
- read product label and manufacturer's directions before each use
- use appropriate protective gear, such as safety glasses and gloves, when handling pool chemicals

NEVER:

- mix chlorine products with each other, with acid, or with any other substance

For more information about safe use of pool chemicals, visit

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/pdf/pool_chem_assoc_inj.pdf.

For more information on CDC's Healthy Swimming Program, please visit

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.