



What's In Your Pool?

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Surveys indicate that only 12% of pool users shower before entering the water. That doesn't worry you? How about this - one in every five adults admits to having urinated in pool water... and just one person can affect 10,000 gallons of pool water for 9 days!

Additionally, pharmaceuticals enter pool water via urine, sweat, body surfaces and swimwear. These chemicals are not filtered out by pool equipment, and they can have a half-life (the time required for the concentration to decrease by half) in the pool of 2 to 3 days. It is estimated that 14ml/hour are ingested by swimmers, including children. The main chemicals found in the water, that shouldn't be there, are:

- Caffeine
- Ibuprofen and acetaminophen
- Anti-epileptic medication
- TECP (a flame retardant used in the manufacturer of swimsuits)
- DEET (an insect repellent)

Although the pool operators may ultimately be responsible for maintaining the pools, every person using the pool has an obligation to assist. Improving pool etiquette by changing two simple habits will help ensure that the pool stays clean.

1. Use bathrooms, not pools. Whether swimming laps, taking water fitness classes, or playing with the kids, take a bathroom break as needed. During a group exercise session, just let your instructor know where you are headed so that he/she is not concerned about you exiting class early!
2. Shower first. Take a 30-second warm shower before entering the water to remove sweat, dirt, body and hair products, etc. Don't use a public-use pool as your personal bathtub or shower!

You may think that your actions won't matter but that is not true. There is a trickle-down effect. When these two rules are not followed, pool operators have to increase the amount of chemicals used, which affects the bottom line of their budget. Then, the cost gets passed on to the pool user (you) through increased fees or, worse, the pool may eventually close.

In order to keep the pool water clean and clear, be a part of the solution and encourage others to do the same!