



No Swimming?

Swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, and oceans have the potential to harbor germs that can cause serious illness for organ transplant recipients.

Organ transplant recipients need to be aware of environments that can potentially expose them to disease and infection. Recreational swimming environments are great to look at but are not safe to play or swim in for transplant recipients.

Swimming environments provide the perfect exposure setting for a variety of infections such as gastrointestinal, skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic, and wound infections. The most common infection is diarrhea. Swallowing just a little bit of water, breathing in fountain water mists, or having contact with contaminated water can cause illness for transplant recipients. In enclosed swimming pool environments, water related chemicals in the water or chemicals that evaporate from the water could cause indoor air quality problems that might also cause illness.

The common belief that chlorine kills germs instantly is no longer true. Today, there are germs that are very tolerant to chlorine and were not known to cause human disease until recently. Once these germs get into water environments such as public pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, and interactive fountains, it can take anywhere from minutes to days for chlorine to kill them. Transplant recipients have no way of knowing if these recreational water features are really safe, so it is recommended we observe the “No Swimming” caution to avoid possible infection. Transplant recipients may consider swimming one year after their transplant in a properly maintained chlorinated pool **after an informed discussion with their transplant physician.**

Lakes, rivers, and oceans are also water environments that have the potential to expose transplant recipients to bacterial and parasitic infections, harmful chemicals, and sewage overflow.

So be safe, take a camera, lots of sunscreen, and a wide brimmed hat and observe the “NO SWIMMING” caution for a healthy transplant lifestyle.

The Transplant Living Community does not engage in the practice of medicine and under no circumstances, recommends particular treatments for specific individuals. In all cases the “TLC” recommends that patients consult their physician before pursuing any course of treatment or action concerning personal medical care.