

SAFETY SENSE

For Safer, Healthier Pools—Use Your Senses

(NAPSA)—Use your senses!

This simple yet important advice is offered to swimming pool users by a national partnership of public health, water quality and consumer advocacy organizations. The Healthy Pools partnership, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Consumers League, the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, and the Chlorine Chemistry Council, says that your senses of sight, touch, smell and sound can help you and your family enjoy a healthy swim, and possibly avoid some very unpleasant pool-related illnesses.

Michigan State University microbiologist and Healthy Pools spokesperson Dr. Joan Rose says unhealthy pool water can lead to a variety of illnesses. “Exposure to waterborne germs such as Giardia, E. coli, Shigella and Cryptosporidium in poorly maintained pools can cause diarrhea, respiratory illness, ear or nose infections and skin outbreaks.” Proper water treatment, including chlorination, kills germs and helps prevent illnesses. However, the CDC reported in a 2004 study that 54 percent of all swimming pools monitored were found to be in violation of at least one public health code.

The Healthy Pools partnership offers “Sense”-able Swimming tips, designed to help children and adults recognize healthy swimming facilities and monitor the quality of pool water:

Sight: Pool water should look clean, clear and blue. The painted stripes and the drain should appear crisp and clear at the bottom of the pool.

Touch: Smooth pool sides are a good thing. Swimming pool tile shouldn’t be sticky or slippery.

Smell: Clean water means you



Your senses can tell you a lot about the safety of the pool you swim in.

shouldn’t smell anything. Chlorine is essential to a healthy pool, but a heavy chemical odor signals a problem.

Sound: Sometimes silence isn’t golden. The sound of active pool cleaning equipment is the sound of an active pool maintenance program.

Taste: Don’t drink or swallow the pool water. In fact, try to avoid getting it in your mouth at all.

The group also advises swimmers to use their common sense, too, by following good hygiene practices, such as always showering before swimming, taking kids for frequent bathroom breaks, and never going swimming when ill with diarrhea.

According to CDC epidemiologist Michael Beach, it is a matter of everyone working together. “It’s crucial that public health professionals, pool operators and the general swimming public work in partnership to increase everyone’s chances for healthy swimming experiences.”

For more information about how to recognize problem pools and promote cleaner, healthier pools, log on to www.healthy-pools.org.