



Summit County Public Health

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Management of Fecal Accidents at Pools and Spas

When a fecal accident occurs in pools and spas, more extreme measures must be taken to protect the health of the users due to hardier varieties of pathogens, which are extremely resistant to disinfectants. [Instructors, lifeguards, and the general public should not use the pool if they are suffering from a known communicable disease or a diarrheal type illness.](#) Children who are not toilet-trained should use special "swimsuit diapers" or be prohibited from using the pool.

The following procedures should be performed after a **FORMED STOOL** (solid, non-liquid) accident:

1. Direct everyone to leave all pools into which water containing the feces is circulated.
2. Remove as much of the fecal material as possible and dispose of it in a sanitary manner.
3. Raise and maintain the FREE available chlorine concentration to at least 2 parts per million (ppm) for at least 25 minutes (maintain pH between 7.2 – 7.5). Ensure this concentration is found throughout all co-circulating pools by sampling at least three widely spaced locations away from return water outlets.

The following procedures should be performed after a **DIARRHEA** (liquid stool) accident:

1. Direct everyone to leave all pools into which water containing the feces is circulated.
2. Remove as much of the fecal material as possible and dispose of it in a sanitary manner.
3. Raise and maintain the FREE available chlorine concentration to at 20 parts per million (ppm) for at least 12.75 hours (maintain pH at 7.5). Ensure this concentration is found throughout all cocirculating pools by sampling at least three widely spaced locations away from return water outlets.
4. Ensure that the filtration system is operating while the pool reaches and maintains the proper free available chlorine concentration during disinfection.
5. Backwash the filter thoroughly after reaching 20 ppm. The effluent should be discharged directly to waste (such as a sanitary sewer, NOT a storm drain or onto the ground). Do not return the backwash through the filter. Where appropriate, replace the filter media.
6. Swimmers may be allowed into the pool once the free available chlorine level is below 5 ppm and all other chemical levels are within state regulations.

Additional Notes:

Establish a fecal accident log. Document each fecal accident by recording date and time of the event, formed stool or diarrhea, free available chlorine concentration and pH at the time of observation of the event, and the procedures followed to respond to the fecal accident.

Vacuuming stool from the pool is not recommended, but if a vacuum system is used, the waste should be discharged directly to a sewer or other approved waste disposal system and not through the filtration system. If a fecal accident occurs in a spa or wading pool, it should be drained and cleaned prior to refilling.

CDC Recommendations for Fecal Incident Response for Pool Staff 3/16/10

www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming