

SEVEN PRACTICAL WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO HARMFUL CHEMICALS WHEN *swimming*

One of the main uses for chlorine is to kill bacteria in water and these days, it is hard to avoid. The most common sources of exposure are from drinking water, showering and bathing, and swimming pools, but it is also used in the manufacture of various textiles, paper and plastic.

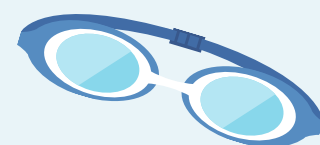
Disinfectant chemicals (the most common being chlorine) are added to swimming pools to minimise the risk of microbial contamination. We are vulnerable to swimming pool chemicals in 3 ways: oral ingestion, dermal absorption and inhalation. Over the years, concern has grown over the potential side effects of chlorine exposure. When chlorine is used in swimming pools, it combines rapidly with organic substances like sweat and urine to create volatile and harmful disinfectant by-products (this is often what we smell when we visit indoor pools). These by-products are harmful to humans and exposure should be managed and limited.

Research is linking chlorine exposure to serious health issues such as allergies and asthma, but the most obvious and immediate side effects of swimming in chlorinated water include: dry, flaky skin; red, stinging eyes; brittle & discoloured hair; nose & throat irritation.

protect YOUR FAMILY WITH THESE SIMPLE STEPS

1 AVOID CHLORINE

Simply avoid chlorine if you can, and try swimming in the ocean or a saltwater pool.



2 CHOOSE A WELL-VENTILATED OR OUTDOOR POOL

Poorly ventilated indoor pools are the biggest hazard as the vapour hovers and is inevitably inhaled.

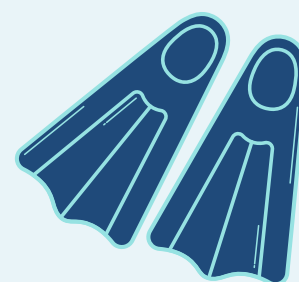


3 SHOWER BEFORE YOU GET IN

Not only will your skin and hair absorb less pool water when it is already wet, you'll also wash away traces of sweat, urine, faecal matter and other potential contaminants that interact with pool chemicals to form harmful by-products. And the sooner you teach children not to pee in the pool, the better!

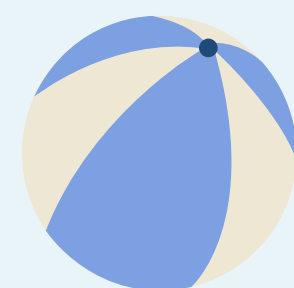
4 APPLY LOTION/OIL TO SKIN & HAIR

Applied prior to swimming, lotion/oil helps to repel water, meaning less chlorine will be absorbed. Vitamin C has been proven to effectively break down chlorine so spraying a simple vitamin C solution after swimming is also a good idea. Simply add 1 tsp of ascorbic acid (vitamin C powder) to a 50ml bottle and top with filtered water. Spray liberally over hair and body, then shower as usual. Be aware that vitamin C degrades quickly in water so make this spray up every two weeks or so and store in the fridge to prolong shelf life. If you find the spray irritating, dilute further with water.



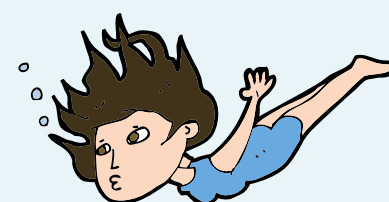
5 WEAR A SWIMMING CAP & GOGGLES

This will help to protect your hair and scalp, and your eyes.



6 SHOWER IMMEDIATELY AFTER SWIMMING

Rinse away pool water. Some natural options to help wash hair and skin include using a simple body scrub and foaming wash, or rinse hair with apple cider vinegar and water (1:10 ratio).



7 DO YOUR RESEARCH

When installing a pool at home, look into companies that use systems that don't rely on chlorine alone – and there are plenty of options available.

