

Water may markedly aggravate certain skin diseases. Individuals with certain types of exema and other conditions made worse by moisture should avoid the pool.

Swimming may promote the spread of such communicable diseases as ringworm, and scabies, by bringing the infected and uninfected directly or indirectly in contact with one another. Athlete's foot is widespread and has stimulated the production of many supposed panaceas. Too often they have little more therapeutic basis than wishful thinking and economic gain. Foot baths of various kinds have been advised, but most of them have proved ineffective because the trichophyton is quite resistant, the chemical can not be used in sufficient concentration without causing irritation or the swimmers will not stand in the solution long enough to allow sufficient time to destroy this fungus. Fungicides may have an inhibiting effect, but to expect more of them is to be quite optimistic. The best protection against athlete's foot is cleanliness, dry foot, and foot covering which protects the infected against re-infection and the uninfected against the infected.

Polluted water may contain either animals or plants which may parasitize the skin and cause inflammation. The cercaria or larval form of the Schistosoma is a notable example. Possibly certain mycoses may pass from one individual to another by way of the water of poorly managed swimming pools. Mycotic infections are often spread by the common use of towels, brushes, combs, etc.

Venereal Disease

Some years ago swimming pools were reported to have been a source of venereal disease. They were small, highly polluted pools and those infected were females. A well managed pool with a residual chlorine content of 0.4 - 0.6 p.p.m. is not a factor in the occurrence of gonorrhea or syphilis in a community. The relatively low temperature of the water, the presence of chlorine, and the difficulty with which the gonococcus and the spirochaeta pallida survive outside of the body insure against transmission of venereal disease in swimming pools.

In highly polluted pools under specially favorable circumstances, it is conceivable the gonococcus may get into the eyes of swimmers and cause inflammation. When this occurs, with the exception of the one chance in a million, the pool has to be indescribably dirty, its management incompetent, the cleansing shower neglected, and its chlorine content too low to be effective. The common use of towels and possibly of soap offers an opportunity for the gonococcus to pass from one female to another or to get into the eyes and produce a very serious type of conjunctivitis.

Castro-Intestinal Infections

Typhoid fever, the dysenteries, and other diseases whose transmission is accomplished by bacteria passing more or less rapidly from the intestine of one individual to the mouth of another may be conveyed to swimmers in several ways:

1. Within the pool itself - if it is poorly managed and its residual chlorine is inadequate.
2. By pollution of the water outside of the pool and insufficient disinfection before it reaches it.
3. By bathing in water too close to its source of pollution and thus not giving an opportunity for purification by dilution. Swimming near the outlet of a sewer is an excellent example.