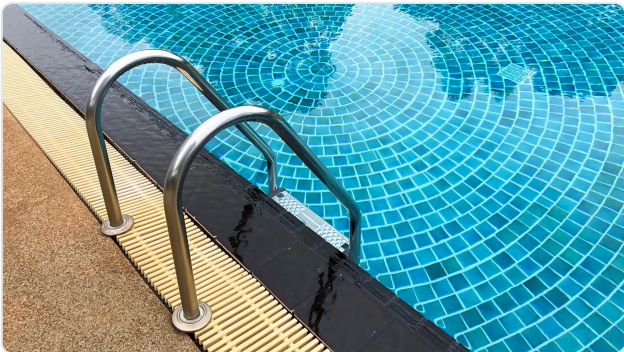




What to Do When There is Blood or Vomit in the Pool

KEY POINTS

- Blood and vomit can spread germs at pools.
- When they end up in or around the pool, clean and disinfect the water and/or surface immediately using the procedures described below.



Overview

Blood

Chlorine kills germs found in blood (such as hepatitis B and HIV). CDC is not aware of any instances in which a person has become infected with bloodborne germs after being exposed to blood in a pool.

While there is no public health reason to do so, aquatic staff might choose to respond to blood spill in the water as if responding to vomit in the pool.

Vomit

Children and adults sometimes vomit in the pool after accidentally swallowing water. If a person swallows too much pool water and throws it up, it is unlikely to spread illness. However, if they throw up more than just pool water — like previously eaten food — aquatic staff should act immediately to clean it up. The germs most likely to be spread by vomit are [noroviruses](#).

Steps to take

Steps for cleaning up blood or vomit on pool surfaces

One of the most commonly used chemicals for disinfection is a homemade solution of household bleach and water. Mix a fresh batch before each cleanup to make sure it is effective. Bleach and water solutions lose their effectiveness after 24 hours. Follow the directions on the bleach bottle for preparing a diluted bleach solution. If your bottle does not have directions, you can make a bleach solution by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of room temperature water or
- 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of room temperature water

Add the household bleach to the water and gently mix them together.

Clean-up procedure using bleach solution

1. Block off the area from patrons until cleanup and disinfection is complete.
2. Put on disposable gloves to prevent contamination of hands.
3. Wipe up the blood or vomit using paper towels or other absorbent material. Put the trash in a plastic garbage bag.
4. Gently pour the bleach solution onto the contaminated surface(s).
5. Leave the bleach solution on the contaminated surface(s) for 20 minutes.
6. Wipe up the bleach solution using paper towels or other absorbent material. Put the trash in a plastic garbage bag.

- 7. Disinfect cleaning materials that cannot be thrown away, such as mops and scrub brushes, by covering them with the bleach solution and then letting them air dry.
- 8. Remove the gloves and place them in a plastic garbage bag.
- 9. Double-bag and securely tie up all plastic garbage bags. Throw them away.
- 0. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Steps for cleaning up blood or vomit in pool water

- 1. Close the pool to swimmers.
- 2. Put on disposable gloves.
- 3. Remove the vomit or blood using a net or bucket.
- 4. Clean as much vomit or blood as possible from the item used for removal and dispose of the item in a sanitary manner or disinfect the item by immersing it in the pool during the 30-minute disinfection time described below.
- 5. Remove and dispose of gloves.
- 6. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- 7. Raise the free chlorine concentration to, or maintain it at, 2 parts per million (ppm) and maintain the pH at 7.5 or less for 30 minutes.
- 8. Confirm that the filtration system is operating properly.

Resources

[The Model Aquatic Health Code \(MAHC\).](#)

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:
[National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases \(NCEZID\); National Center for Environmental Health](#)