

US: 1 in 8 swimming pools closed for health violations

May 19 2016

One in eight swimming pools in five populous states are closed upon inspection due to dirty and potentially dangerous water, US health authorities said Thursday.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's report was based on data from nearly 50,000 pools, hot tubs and water parks in five states where such facilities are most popular—Florida, New York, Arizona, California and Texas.

"Most inspections of public aquatic venues (almost 80 percent) identified at least one violation," said the report.

"One in eight inspections resulted in immediate closure because of serious health and safety violations," it added.

The report, based on data from 2013, said the parasite *Cryptosporidium*—which can cause diarrhea and vomiting— has emerged as the leading culprit in water-related outbreaks.

The highest number of closures came in kiddie pools, or wading pools, one in five of which were found to have serious violations.

"The most common violations reported were related to improper pH (15 percent), safety equipment (13 percent), and disinfectant concentration (12 percent)," said the report. Water's pH level indicates how acidic or basic it is.

"Almost one third of local health departments do not regulate, inspect or license public pools, hot tubs and water playgrounds," said Michele Hlavsa, chief of CDC's Healthy Swimming Program.

"We should all check for inspection results online or on site before using [public pools](#), [hot tubs](#) or water playgrounds and do our own inspection before getting into the water," she said.

According to Robert Glatter, an emergency physician at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, the "results of the study clearly show that more work needs to be done to better safeguard the public at large."

Glatter, who was not involved in the report, said people should never swim if they have diarrhea.

"When close to 80 percent of public swimming venues are cited for at least one violation, it's time to wake up and pay attention," said Glatter.

"To protect yourself and your family, the best advice is to inquire about the inspection results online, or call ahead before using a specific water venue," he added.

"Consider bringing a test kit to check the pH and free chlorine or bromine concentration of the water if you are visiting a public or private pool or hot tub, since this is an important determinant of the general health of the [water](#), and also reflects the ability to prevent the spread of infectious disease."

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