



What to do about Bird (and Other) Droppings in the Swimming Pool

By Bob G. Vincent

There's nothing like a swim in an outdoor pool in beautiful summer weather. As the open air is the domain of nature's flying creatures, however, the occasional *splat* of bird droppings in the pool is to be expected. What, if anything, needs to be done about bird droppings in the pool?

According to the [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#), many germs that

might be present in bird droppings can infect humans, although few, if any, outbreaks have been associated with bird droppings. Duck and goose droppings are highlighted by CDC as

potentially containing *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* or *Cryptosporidium*. Fortunately, in a well-maintained pool most pathogens in bird droppings are killed by chlorine within minutes, according to CDC. *Cryptosporidium*, a microscopic parasite surrounded by a tough chlorine-resistant outer shell, can be removed by a well-maintained pool filtration system.



Addressing Bird (and Other Types) of Droppings in the Pool

CDC recommends pool managers and backyard pool owners treat bird droppings in the pool in the same way that they would respond to finding formed human feces in the pool. The goal is to remove the waste material, if possible, and disinfect the water by taking the following steps:

- Close the pool to swimmers.
- Put on disposable gloves.
- Remove the waste material using a net or bucket. Do not vacuum the waste from the pool.
- Clean off any debris or dirt from the item used to remove the waste.
- Disinfect the item used to remove the waste by immersing it in the pool during the 30-minute disinfection time described below.
- Remove and dispose of gloves.

- [Wash your hands](#) thoroughly with soap and water immediately.
- Raise the free chlorine concentration to, or maintain it at, 2 parts per million (ppm); maintain the pH level at 7.5 or less; keep the temperature at 77°F (25°C) or higher. The free chlorine and pH should remain at these levels for 30 minutes.
- Confirm that the filtration system is operating properly.

How to Discourage Birds around the Pool

CDC provides the following tips for discouraging birds (not the duck and geese varieties) from frequenting the pool area:

- Remove plants that produce edible nuts, fruits, and berries.
- Remove bird feeders.
- Trim or remove trees and shrubs to limit branches hanging around or over the pool that can be used by roosting birds.

To discourage ducks and geese:

- Do not keep domestic ducks and geese in the pool area to decrease the likelihood of wild ducks and geese becoming attracted to the area.
- Do not feed ducks or geese.
- Ducks and geese eat grass. If possible, reduce the area of grass lawns around the pool or install barriers that control movement between the pool and grass lawns, such as fences, grid wires and hedges. Noise makers, goose repellents and trained dogs can also be used to discourage non-migratory or resident geese from becoming a nuisance.

Happy swimming! For more information on addressing animals and pools, please see this [CDC website](#). For further information on waste products in pools, please see the CDC's Fecal Incident Response Recommendations for Pool Staff, linked from this [CDC web page](#).

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