



Happy Holidays at the Pool

By the Water Quality & Health Council

Looking for a fun family holiday activity that does not involve electronic gadgets, shopping, eating cookies or drinking egg nog? Look no farther than your local indoor swimming pool! Here are three good reasons to go swimming at least once during the fall and winter holidays:

1. *Swimming is great exercise.*

Ease your conscience as you ease your body into the warm water of an indoor pool. Swimming is the fourth most popular sports activity in the U.S. (after walking, exercising with equipment and camping)¹, and a good way to get regular aerobic exercise without taxing your joints. Studies show swimmers have about half the risk of death of inactive people.²



Are your children comfortable around the water and learning to swim? Swimming lessons are usually available year-round at indoor pools. Additionally, children delight in indoor water play features such as water slides and showers, and parents appreciate the physical activity they promote.

2. *The pool is a gadget-free environment.*

Leave your smart phone behind and take a healthy break from texting and emailing while at the pool. Instead of communicating electronically, reconnect with family members, *wet face to wet face*. Older family members might not be as electronically savvy as the youngsters in the family, but in the gadget-free environment of the pool, they just may demonstrate the perfect backstroke.

A Word to the Wise

Showering before entering the pool can improve the air quality in indoor pools. That strong chemical smell around some pools is not from chlorine, but from *chloramines*, volatile substances that are produced by a chemical reaction between chlorine pool sanitizer and substances—perspiration, body oils, cosmetics, urine—from swimmers' bodies. Shower before swimming to eliminate these. And please don't pee in the pool!

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. [Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012. Arts, Recreation, and Travel: Participation in Selected Sports Activities 2009.](#)

² Chase NL, Sui X, Blair SN. 2008. Swimming and all-cause mortality risk compared with running, walking, and sedentary habits in men. *Int J of Aquatic Res and Educ.* 2(3):213-23.

Would you like a relaxing visit with a friend or family member in the pool? Grab a couple of kick boards, don some fins and stream down a swimming lane together. The conversation will flow...

3. *The pool can be your family's "happy place."*

Our bodies are mostly water, so in a sense, we are most at home in the water. Appreciate the sensation of buoyancy and feel stress evaporate as you glide through the pool water or float peacefully on your back. Holidays can be stressful. The pool just might be the perfect environment in which families pause from the usual hectic pace, connect, and refresh themselves in both body and spirit!

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