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## **Half of Americans Use Swimming Pools as Communal Bathtub, Survey Finds**

**WASHINGTON** — Americans will soon head to the pool as Memorial Day weekend marks the start of summer swim season fun, but a new survey finds that many knowingly contribute to making pools dirty – a practice that can lead to bad pool chemistry for everyone in the water.

The survey found that **more than half of Americans (51%) report using a swimming pool as a communal bathtub**, either swimming as a substitute for showering or using the pool to rinse off after exercise or yardwork. This habit has taken hold even though nearly two-thirds (64%) of Americans report they know that pool chemicals do not eliminate the need to shower before swimming.

Experts from the [Water Quality & Health Council](#), the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), and the [Pool and Hot Tub Alliance \(PHTA\)](#) are educating the public about healthy and safe swimming.

“When dirt, sweat, personal care products, and other things on our bodies react with chlorine, there is less chlorine available to kill germs,” said Dr. Chris Wiant, chair of the Water Quality & Health Council. “Rinsing off for just 1 minute removes most of the dirt, sweat, or anything else on your body.”

Additionally, 40% of Americans admit they’ve peed in the pool as an adult. Pee also reacts with chlorine, reducing the amount of chlorine available to kill germs.

“The bottom line is: Don’t pee in the pool,” said Michele Hlavsa, chief of CDC’s Healthy Swimming program. “Swimming is a great way to be physically active and not peeing in the pool is a key healthy swimming step.”

The survey revealed that 24% of Americans would go in a swimming pool within one hour of having diarrhea, and 48% report they never shower before swimming. Also, most Americans don’t know that pool chemistry can be impacted by such personal care items as makeup (53%) and deodorant (55%).

“Pools are great places to have fun with friends and family,” said Jim Mock, Interim Executive Director of the Pool and Hot Tub Alliance. “A trained pool operator can get the mix of pool chemicals healthy and safe, and swimmers can help keep it right by swimming healthy.”

Only 1 in 5 Americans (21%) reports ever using a pool test kit to check chlorine levels and pH in a public pool (for example, at a hotel or waterpark). Hopefully, that will increase this year as the Water Quality & Health Council is offering [free pool test kits](#) through its 15<sup>th</sup> annual [Healthy Pools](#) campaign. Swimmers can use the kit to measure chlorine levels and pH in both backyard and public pools.

Additionally, consider checking inspection scores at the swimming venue or online. The Water Quality & Health Council has compiled a growing list of local and state health departments that provide online access to [swimming pool inspection reports](#). If you don’t see your local community or state listed,

contact your health department, check on-site at the pool facility, or ask the pool's manager directly for more information.

The 2019 Healthy Pools survey, conducted online by Sachs Media Group, measured perceptions and behaviors related to swimming pools and public health. Sachs Media Group interviewed 3,100 American adults on April 12–13, 2019. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.7% at the 95% confidence level and was nationally representative of American adults in terms of age, race, gender, income, and region.

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