

Preventing *Naegleria fowleri* infection

Bacteria and other harmful organisms thrive in warm, standing bodies of water.

Do not dig or stir up sediments in the water

Keep your face out of the water to reduce your risk of infection by ameba.

Seek prompt medical attention if you become ill after swimming in fresh water.

POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS AREAS TO SWIM



Warm, stagnant areas of water are the primary habitats for ameba.



The bottom of lakes and ponds should not be disturbed when swimming.

For more information please visit the following web sites:

www.HealthELinks.com

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/naegleria/default.htm>

A Guide to Safe Swimming

Information about PAM
(primary amebic meningoencephalitis)



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Facts about PAM



What is *Naegleria*?

Naegleria is an amoeba that is commonly found in the environment in water and soil. Only one species of *Naegleria* has been found to infect humans - *Naegleria fowleri*.

Where is it found?

Naegleria fowleri is found worldwide, most commonly in:

- Warm bodies of fresh water such as lakes, rivers and hot springs
- Warm water discharge from industrial plants
- Poorly maintained and minimally chlorinated swimming pools
- Soil

How common is infection?

Although *Naegleria* is commonly found in the environment, infection occurs rarely. Between 1995 and 2004 there were only 23 infections documented in the U.S.

Can I get infected from a swimming pool?

You cannot get *Naegleria* infection from a swimming pool as long as the pool is properly cleaned, maintained, and chlorinated.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is *Naegleria* most common?

Infection is most common during the summer months, when the water temperature is warm.

How does infection with *Naegleria* occur?

Infection occurs when the amoeba enters the body through the nose. Generally when people are swimming underwater, diving, or doing other water sports that result in water going up the nose. The amoeba then travels to the brain and spinal cord. Infection with *Naegleria* causes the disease primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM), a brain inflammation.

Can the infection spread from person to person?

No - it cannot be spread from person to person.

Is there treatment?

While several drugs are effective against *Naegleria* in the lab, their effectiveness is unclear since most infections have still been fatal.

How can I prevent an infection with *Naegleria*?

- Avoid jumping into fresh water such as lakes, rivers, or hot springs during periods of high temperatures and low water volume.
- Hold the nose shut or use nose clips when jumping or diving into bodies of fresh water.
- Avoid digging or stirring up the sediment when in shallow, warm waters.

What are the symptoms of *Naegleria* infection?

Initial symptoms start 1 - 14 days after infection and include: headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, and stiff neck. As the amoeba cause more extensive destruction of brain tissue it leads to confusion, lack of attention to people and surroundings, loss of balance, seizures, and hallucinations. The disease progresses rapidly and usually results in death.