



Two Initiatives to Make Pool Water Safer

A consortium of visionaries wants to keep pools open and safer. Funding more research and a workshop to change attitudes regarding peeing in pools is planned for 2013.

Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA, May 28, 2013—Non-profit National Swimming Pool Foundation® (NSPF®) Board of Directors announced it is funding the third year of a grant supporting the goal of reducing disinfection-by-product (DBP) formation. The \$75,000 grant for 2013, awarded to Purdue University for a project that is being directed by Ernest R. Blatchley III, Ph.D., P.E., BCEE includes support from the Chlorine Chemistry Division of the American Chemistry Council and a leading UV manufacturer, [Engineered Treatment Systems LLC](#). The goal of the research conducted under this grant is to improve understanding of and reduce formation of DBPs, and aligns with the NSPF Board’s mission to help keep pools open by continuing to improve pool safety.

The [National Swimming Pool Foundation](#) has placed a high priority on improving pool safety, and increasing the understanding of the health benefits associated with aquatic immersion and exercise. Several high-profile studies have been published suggesting that exposure to chemicals that form in treated pools and spas as a result of the use of disinfectants (e.g., chlorine, bromine, ozone, or UV radiation) – referred to as DBPs – can cause adverse health effects. DBPs are formed when disinfectants react to other chemicals, including those that are included in bodily fluids like urine. The chemistry that leads to DBP formation and decay is quite complex. As a result, research is needed to understand and minimize DBP formation. “It is important that we do the right research to minimize any possible problems associated with DBPs so that people can enjoy the tremendous benefits of swimming, aquatic exercise and immersion,” reinforced [Thomas M. Lachocki, Ph.D.](#), with NSPF. “One easy way to reduce DBPs is to reduce urine in pools,” he added.

The National Swimming Pool Foundation wants to make sure the public is well informed about healthy swimming habits. Thus, the non-profit is organizing a 2013 initiative to help make pool water safer and more appealing. A full-day workshop will explore strategies to influence public behavior and reduce urination in swimming pools. The news media can play a key role in helping to change behavior, and are invited to attend and participate in the workshop, which will be led by [Edgar Papke](#) following his keynote presentation at the [World Aquatic Health™ Conference](#) on Friday, October 18, 2013 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

One in five Americans admits to peeing in the pool, according to a 2012 survey by the [Water Quality and Health Council](#). Unfortunately, several high-profile Olympians have said it is “OK” to pee in the pool. Nearly 100% of elite competitive swimmers admit to peeing in the pool, according to former U.S. National Team Swimmer, Carly Geehr, in an interview with Quora. “The tragedy and irony is that swimmers and coaches, who are most passionate about growing swimming and aquatics, are contributing to the problem,” stated Dr. Lachocki.



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“The October workshop is an opportunity to start a cultural shift. We strongly encourage the community of pool users, coaches and operators to come to the October workshop and work together to improve pool safety,” he added.

“Healthy swimming depends on what we swimmers bring into the pool – and what we keep out of it. We share the water we swim in, and we each need to do our part to keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy,” said [Michele Hlavsa](#), chief of [Healthy Swimming at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

“Have you ever walked into an indoor pool area, got a whiff of the strong chemical smell and thought, ‘Wow there’s a lot of chlorine in the pool?’ It’s not actually the chlorine. It’s the di- and tri-chloramines, or what you get when chlorine combines with what comes out of (e.g. pee) or washes off of (e.g., sweat and personal care products) swimmers’ bodies. Di- and tri-chloramines are different from the mono-chloramine, which is sometimes used to treat our drinking water. They irritate the eyes and respiratory track and can even aggravate asthma,” she explained.

Urine in pools interferes with the chemistry and reduces the efficacy, thus compromising the safety and health of bathers. “Peeing in the pool *is* a big deal; the addition of urine to the chemically-treated water causes chemicals to form and helps unhealthy germs to survive,” said Dr. Lachocki. Ms. Hlavsa agreed, saying “Mixing chlorine and urine not only creates di- and tri-chloramines – it also uses up the chlorine in the pool which would otherwise kill germs.” “On top of that, it’s not just about protecting those *in* the water,” summarized Lachocki. “Lifeguards, coaches, parents and swimmers on deck are breathing in the air that has DBPs formed from urine and disinfectants - especially at indoor pool environments. Is it really too much to ask that swimmers take two minutes to use the rest room?”

About NSPF® —The National Swimming Pool Foundation® is a non-profit organization established in 1965, dedicated to encouraging healthier living by increasing aquatic activity through education and research. NSPF seeks to keep pools open by making them safer. NSPF classroom and online educational programs reach about 30,000 professionals each year. The foundation has donated over \$4 million since 2003 to fund grants to prevent illness, injury, and drowning, and to demonstrate the health benefits of aquatic activity. In 2012, the Foundation launched *Step Into Swim™ Campaign*, a 10-year initiative to create 1 million more swimmers. Teaching people to swim is an investment in the future generations of healthier and safer people. The campaign raises funds that are directly given to leading learn-to-swim organizations. Visit www.nspf.org and www.StepIntoSwim.org to learn more and to donate.

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