

City of Oxford Swimming Club



Sickness Guidelines for swimmers

Not every illness needs to keep you or your child from swimming, but swimmers **must not attend** a training session or competition if:

- they **have something that can be passed on** to other swimmers, volunteers, or coaching staff
- they have been **advised not to swim** by a healthcare professional (e.g., doctor, nurse)
- they are **too unwell** to safely complete an activity or session
- have **diarrhoea** (see below)

If you need to keep your child away from swimming, you must inform their coach via their squad rep on the first day of their absence.

Some people (e.g., pregnant women, young babies, people with reduced immunity etc.) are more vulnerable to certain infection and so it is important that parents let the club know if a swimmer has an infection especially if they have:

- Chicken pox or shingles
- Cold sores or herpes infection
- Slapped cheek
- Rubella

If in doubt parents should seek professional medical advice regarding returning to swimming.

Preventing Infections spreading

To prevent infections spreading among swimmers they should

- Shower before getting in the pool
- Wash their hands after going to the toilet
- Not swim if they have diarrhoea
- Not swim if they have an open wound or recent piercing that cannot be covered with a waterproof plaster
- Not Pee or Poo in the pool
- Not share towels
- Avoid swallowing the water
- Dry thoroughly, including their ears and between toes, after swimming

Specific conditions

This is not an exhaustive list. Parents are advised to seek professional medical advice for the management of illness.

Diarrhoea and vomiting

Most diarrhoea and vomiting illnesses are caused by infections that are highly contagious. The organisms that cause diarrhoeal infections are not always killed by chlorination in swimming pools and so germs can be easily spread in pools.

A swimmer **MUST NOT** swim in a pool whilst unwell and for **48 hours** after symptoms (i.e., diarrhoea or infectious vomiting) have gone.

Cryptosporidium

If a swimmer has been diagnosed with or suspected of having cryptosporidium, a parasitic infection spread by contaminated water including from swimming pools and open water swimming, the swimmer **MUST NOT** swim for **2 weeks** after symptoms have gone.

Coughs and Colds

Coughs and colds are caused by viral infections and easily spread from contact with infected droplets (e.g., from direct contact, inhaling droplet etc.). A person is infectious from a few days from the start of symptoms up to 2 weeks. A swimmer with a cold can swim provided they feel well enough to complete the session.

Chickenpox and shingles

Chickenpox is a highly contagious viral infection that can make some vulnerable people (e.g. those with low immunity, pregnant women, babies) seriously unwell. People with chickenpox are contagious from up to 72 hours before the rash appears and until all the rash has dried up. It is important that you inform the club if a swimmer develops chicken pox.

A swimmer **MUST** not swim whilst unwell and cannot return to swimming until all lesions have dried and scabbed over (usually 5 to 6 days from the start of the rash).

Shingles is reactivation of chickenpox virus. Although you cannot catch shingles from someone else, someone who has not had chicken pox can get chickenpox from someone with shingles. The infection is passed by contact with the fluid from the blisters if they are weeping. To prevent spread swimmers should not swim when they have weeping blisters that cannot be covered. They should also not share clothes or towels.

Verrucas and warts

Warts and verrucas are caused by human papilloma virus. They can be spread to other people by contaminated surfaces (e.g., towels, changing room floors, areas around

swimming pools etc.), or through close skin contact. A swimmer is more likely to get infected if their skin is wet or damaged.

If a swimmer has a verruca or wart, they can still swim but must reduce the risk of spreading the infection to others by

- covering the verruca or wart with a plaster or verruca sock whilst swimming
- not sharing towels, shoes, fins etc.
- covering feet (e.g., wearing flip flops or shoes) in the changing rooms

Molluscum contagiosum (water warts)

Molluscum contagiosum is a viral infection that causes water warts (small, raised papules with a dimple in the middle). Although harmless and self-resolving it can be spread by close direct contact or contact with contaminated objects.

If a swimmer has molluscum contagiosum they can still swim but must reduce the risk of spreading the infection to others by

- Covering the lesions with a plaster
- Not sharing towels, clothes etc.

Fungal infections

Athletes foot is common fungal infection spread by direct contact and from contaminated surfaces such as areas around swimming pools and changing rooms.

Ringworm is a fungal infection that can affect any area of skin and is spread from direct contact and from contaminated surfaces.

To prevent spread of fungal infections

- Do not swim until 24 hours after starting treatment
- Cover affected areas (e.g., use a plaster, wear flip-flops on poolside etc.)
- Do not share towels