



Everybody drinks water and we need it for life. But water can make you sick if it has germs in it.

Water that is used for drinking is called 'drinking water.' Water that is used for swimming, skiing or boating is called 'recreational water.' Either type of water can make you sick if it has germs in it and you swallow it or get it in your mouth.

We want you to have fun at camp and not get sick. So, read further to stay well and keep having fun!

Drinking Water

Public drinking water is usually safe because it is properly treated with chlorination and filtration and carefully monitored by water operators. However, naturally occurring, or surface water (streams, ponds, lakes) must be treated before it is used for drinking or cleaning because germs can get into surface water from human or animal feces. So, if you are camping in the wilderness, you have to bring water with you or treat the water that you find in a stream, lake or pond to make it safe.

Ways to Make Surface Water Safe to Drink

If you are camping in the wilderness and can't bring water with you, an adult or counselor will help you treat the water to make it safe to drink. Here are ways that natural water can be made safe:

- Boil the water for at least 1 minute to kill the germs. This is the safest way to sanitize drinking water.
- If boiling is not possible a combination of disinfection and filtration is the best option. You must be sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for the type of disinfectant tablets or filtration device you are using.
- Camp staff should help you if you have to sanitize your water.
- After your water is clean, don't forget to keep it clean.
- When you make a latrine, make sure it is at least eight (8) inches deep and at least two hundred (200) feet away from any natural water.

Recreational Water Illness

Swimming pools, hot tubs and water parks are treated with disinfectants and filtering to help control germs. However, if these protective measures break down, you can get sick. Outbreaks of illness have occurred due to contamination combined with inadequate disinfection.

Lakes, rivers and streams may contain germs from soil or feces. Some types of germs can cause a skin rash or earaches. Other germs can cause diarrhea, vomiting or stomach cramps.

Prevention of Recreational Water Illness

Here are some tips for you to stay well and help keep your friends well. Nobody likes to get sick at camp.

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- Don't swallow water when you are swimming. Try not to get water in your mouth.
- Shower with soap before swimming. Wash your hands after using the toilet. Germs on your body can end up in the water and make other people sick. Urine and sweat can inactivate chlorine and make the water less safe for everybody else.

Please Use the Links Provided For Additional Information:

1. Center for Disease Control:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/travel/index.html>
- http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/travel/backcountry_water_treatment.html
- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/>

2. Environmental Protection Agency:

- <http://water.epa.gov/learn/kids/drinkingwater/index.cfm>
- **WVBPH-Food and Waterborne Diseases Page:**
<http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/FnW/Pages/default.aspx>