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Guide to Swimming with Incontinence

Swimming is an activity enjoyed by people all over the world, especially in the warmer summer months. Swimming is a great way to cool off, get some exercise, and just have some summer fun! For those managing incontinence, swimming can be stressful. But if you take the right precautions, there's no reason you shouldn't be able to enjoy yourself poolside this summer.

Starting with the Facts...

There are quite a few myths and misconceptions when it comes to incontinence and swimming. The fact is, there's no reason you shouldn't be able to take a dip in the pool if you use a proper swim product. By law, most municipal swimming pools require those who manage incontinence actually designed to wear a containment or swim diaper to contain any accidents. However, swim diapers are designed to contain fecal soiling rather than absorb urine.

Pool operators are aware that trace amounts of urine (along with sweat, dead skin cells, shampoo, etc.) that are on your skin are effectively neutralized by the chlorine and other chemicals in the pool, as are small amounts of urine you might leak into the pool. The main concern for pool operators is solid waste, like feces, that cannot be broken down by these chemicals. Swim diapers can absorb a small amount of urine, but their main focus is to contain fecal matter from getting into the pool.

Many people who manage incontinence are afraid to swim due to the myth that there is a chemical in public swimming pools that will change the colour of the water if urine is detected, alerting everyone around you. **This is not true. There is no such chemical that exists, it never has, and it likely never will.** This myth was likely started by parents who wanted to keep their children from peeing in the pool rather than going to the washroom.

In 2014, the US Centres for Disease Control released a statement to debunk this myth. It's important to remember that everyone has trace amounts of urine on their skin, so if a chemical like this did exist it would leave everyone in the pool looking spotty!



Please stop repeating this myth, as it makes the idea of going for a dip in the pool intimidating for those managing incontinence. It's time we put this myth behind us so that everyone can enjoy the pool this summer.

Now that we've outlined a few of the key facts about incontinence and swimming, let's look at some tips to help you enjoy your time in the pool while managing incontinence.

Tip #1: Choose a Well-Fitting Swim Diaper or Underwear Product

As mentioned above, the main purpose of a swim diaper is to contain solid waste, such as feces, rather than urine. While these products aren't designed for urinary incontinence, they're still able to absorb a small amount of urine (i.e. There's enough absorbency to contain a leak if you're walking from the pool to the restroom). If you're managing any type of incontinence and you're planning on spending time in the pool this summer, you should be using a proper swim diaper or underwear product.

It's important to remember that you should never wear a regular incontinence product into the pool. Traditional adult diapers and incontinence underwear are extremely absorbent. If you wear them into a swimming pool, they are immediately going to swell up with pool water and fall apart, rendering the product entirely useless. Please ensure that you are using a proper swim diaper or underwear in the pool.

There are quite a few great options when it comes to incontinence products designed for swimming. With both disposable and reusable options available, there's a swimming solution for everyone. Here are two of our most popular swim products for those managing incontinence:

1) Tranquility Swimmates Disposable Swim Underwear



These swim underwear from Tranquility are perfect for containing bowel incontinence. These disposable underwear will contain accidents, but won't swell up in water. Use this product once, then simply tear the side seams to dispose of in the trash. You can discreetly wear this product under your swimsuit thanks to the form fitting protection.

2) SoSecure Reusable Containment Swim Briefs



If you're looking for a reusable swim brief, these SoSecure swim diapers are a great option. These swim briefs are available in a wide range of sizes, perfect for both children and adults. SoSecure Containment Swim Briefs are very discreet, you can easily wear them under any swimsuit. This product is highly recommended and is used by occupational therapists, physiotherapists and caregivers around the world.

Tip #2: Use the Washroom Before Getting in the Pool & Don't Pee in the Pool

As discussed earlier in this guide, pool operators are mainly concerned with containing any solid waste (feces) that may end up in the pool. That said, you should make sure to empty your bladder prior to getting in the pool to avoid voiding in the water. **Urinating intentionally in the pool is not okay, and it can have serious health consequences.**



While small amounts of urine leaking into the pool is relatively harmless, large amounts from emptying your bladder in the pool has some significant implications. Chlorine is used in pools to kill germs, but when it binds to bodily waste (like urine) it forms chemicals called chloramines. Chloramines in the water irritate skin, eyes and the respiratory tract when the gas they give off gets into the air above the water. This is particularly concerning for indoor pools where these gases cannot easily disperse.

It's always a good idea to empty your bladder and take a shower with soap and water prior to getting in the pool. If you feel you have to go to the restroom, you should vacate the pool and use the toilet. This will help to keep the pool safe and clean for everyone to enjoy.

Tip #3: Bring Backups to the Pool

Finally, we recommend that you always have spare swim diapers in case of an accident. If you're planning on spending a sunny day poolside, you should always bring an extra swim diaper or underwear product. Like with traditional incontinence products, you should always change a soiled swim underwear or diaper.

Having an extra swimsuit and/or set of clothes is always a good idea, and you should also bring a few disposable bags to use for disposing of soiled products or to pack away wet clothing items.



We're Here to Help

Toll Free: 1-877-775-6656

help@healthwick.ca

Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm EST