



## Healthy Swimming/Recreational Water

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## Birds and Pools

Many types of birds are attracted to swimming pools. As a result, swimmers might come in contact with bird droppings (poop) while in the pool. If you find bird droppings in the pool, there are a few simple steps you can take to disinfect the water and keep birds away from the pool.

### Can bird droppings in the pool spread germs to swimmers?


Many germs that might be found in bird droppings can infect humans. Duck and goose droppings, in particular, might contain germs such as [E. coli](#), [Salmonella](#), [Campylobacter](#), or [Cryptosporidium](#) ("Crypto" for short).

Most germs in bird droppings are killed by chlorine within minutes in a well-maintained pool.

The germ [Crypto](#), however, has a tough outer shell that allows it to survive for a long time in the environment. Crypto can survive for days even in properly chlorinated pools. Currently, CDC is not aware of any evidence of Crypto being spread directly from birds to humans.



### What should I do if I find bird droppings in the pool?

Pool operators and owners should respond to finding bird droppings in the pool the same way they would respond to finding formed human feces (poop) in the pool. The Healthy Swimming Program's [Fecal Incident Response Recommendations](#)  [PDF - 644 kb] provide step-by-step guidance on how to properly decontaminate the water in these situations.

#### Follow these steps to remove bird droppings and disinfect the water:

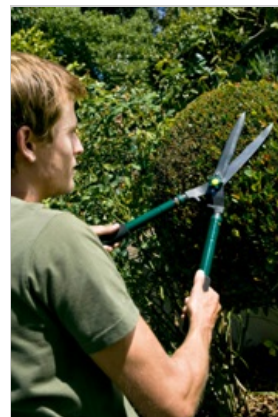
- Close the pool to swimmers.
- Put on disposable gloves.
- Remove the bird droppings using a net or bucket. Do not vacuum the droppings from the pool.
- Clean off any debris or dirt from the item used to remove the bird droppings.
- Disinfect the item used to remove the droppings by immersing it in the pool during the 30-minute disinfection time described below.
- Remove and dispose of gloves.
- [Wash your hands](#) thoroughly with soap and water immediately.
- Raise the free chlorine concentration to, or maintain it at, 2 parts per million (ppm); maintain the pH level at 7.5 or less; keep the temperature at 77°F (25°C) or higher. The free chlorine and pH should remain at these levels for 30 minutes.
- Confirm that the filtration system is operating properly.



### How can I keep birds away from the pool area?

The following steps can help encourage birds, other than ducks and geese (more information on ducks and geese is provided below), to leave the swimming pool area:

- Remove plants that produce edible nuts, fruits, and berries.
- Remove bird feeders.
- Trim or remove trees and shrubs to limit branches hanging around or over the pool that can be used by roosting birds.



### How can I keep ducks and geese away from the pool area?

Do not feed ducks or geese; providing food attracts them and encourages them to return. Many types of ducks and geese eat grass, so reducing the area of grass lawns around the swimming pool or putting up barriers that prohibit movement between swimming pools and grass lawns, such as fences and hedges, might also help. Removing domestic ducks and geese from the pool area can also help decrease the likelihood that wild ducks and geese will be attracted to the area.

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture has additional information on how to manage ducks and geese (also known as waterfowl) in their document [Assistance with Waterfowl Damage](#)  [PDF - 384 kb] .

## What can I do to get rid of ducks and geese already in the pool area?

In the United States, most birds, including ducks and geese, are protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and state laws. Local laws might also apply. Therefore, legal options for dealing with birds are limited and may require a permit. Consult the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services](#)  and your [state wildlife agency](#)  for more information.

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