

### How healthy is your swimming pool?

A healthy swimming pool requires regular maintenance to prevent chemical imbalance and the potential of water becoming stagnant.

A stagnant pool can have a negative impact on our health. It provides a place for mosquitoes to breed, encourages bacterial growth, and can cause odour nuisance.

#### Tips to help maintain your swimming pool

To maintain a healthy swimming pool, ensure the following measures are taken:

- Disinfect (using chlorine or bromine) and filter your pool water frequently;
- perform routine maintenance checks of the pool filtration equipment (filter, inlets, skimmer box, main drain and filtration pump) to ensure they are clean and kept in good working order;
- ensure backwash from the swimming pool is discharged to sewer (not stormwater);
- top up the water level (as needed – be aware of any water restrictions);
- remove visible debris (such as leaves, etc.) on a regular basis;
- do not swim if you have had diarrhoea in the past two weeks (to help prevent spread of germs by contaminating the pool water); Microscopic amounts of infected faecal matter can contaminate an entire pool or hot tub and make others sick if they swallow the water.

- for saltwater pools - regularly check chemical levels, use a salt chlorinator and monitor using an electrolyser;
- consider contacting your local swimming pool service company for further advice on the best way to fix/prevent stagnant water.

For more tips on pool maintenance, you can also visit:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/swimming-pool-crypto.aspx>



#### The dangers of an unhealthy swimming pool

Stagnant water in a swimming pool may result in one or more of the following issues:

- *increased risk of infection from mosquito-borne illness:* Mosquitos can pass on certain arboviruses (such as Ross River Virus and Barmah Forest Virus), as well as some types of nematode worms (such as dog heart worm and filarial worms in humans\*)

- *harmful bacterial growth*: Certain strains of bacteria can thrive in poorly maintained pools, such as *Cryptosporidium* or *Giardia* which are particularly suited to waterborne transmission. This is because they're resistant to chlorine and highly infectious. A small amount of contaminated faeces is enough to infect many swimmers.
- *odour*: foul odours from stagnant water can be a nuisance and affect people in different ways.

\* refer to the Georges River Council's Mosquito factsheet for more information.

Please be aware that a poorly maintained swimming pool can adversely impact your neighbours.

## Considering removing your swimming pool or turning it into a pond?

Maintaining an unwanted swimming pool can be costly. If you are considering removing your swimming pool, in most cases (depending on the type of swimming pool), you will require prior approval through either a Complying Development Certificate or Development Application.

As an alternative to complete removal, you may consider converting your swimming pool into a fish pond\*\*. By stocking your pond with larvivorous fish (tadpoles do not eat larvae) and keeping water circulating to drown larvae, this will help to prevent the water from becoming stagnant or a water source for mosquitos to breed.

Before turning your swimming pool into a pond, you must seek planning advise as approval may be required under the planning legislation.



\*\*Please note that converting to a pond does not negate your obligations under the *Swimming Pools Act 1992*.

## For further information

Further information regarding your swimming pool, please contact Council and speak to an Environmental Health Officer on:

**Phone:** 9330 6400

**E-mail:** [mail@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au)