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### **Study Highlights Risk of Norovirus from Swimming**

Simple tips can help swimmers stay safe in various swimming venues

When most people think of norovirus, they think of people marooned on a cruise ship with raging stomach and intestinal illness, unable to leave their cabins. However, an outbreak at an Oregon lake underscores that swimming can also put the public at risk of catching the ugly bug. Fortunately, following a few easy and effective steps can help maximize the health benefits of swimming while minimizing the risk of getting sick.

In honor of Healthy and Safe Swimming week, experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local and state health officials in Oregon report today on a summer 2014 outbreak that spread via swimming in a contaminated lake.

The norovirus outbreak in July 2014 linked to a lake near Portland, Oregon sickened 70 people. Those who swam in the lake were 2.3 times more likely to develop vomiting or diarrhea than those who visited the park but didn't go in the water. More than half of those who got ill were children between 4–10 years old. Experts believe the outbreak began after a swimmer infected with norovirus had diarrhea or vomited in the water and other swimmers swallowed the contaminated water. To prevent other people from getting sick, park officials closed the lake to swimmers for 10 days.

“Children are prime targets for norovirus and other germs that can live in lakes and swimming pools because they're so much more likely to get the water in their mouths,” said Michael Beach, Ph.D, CDC's associate director for healthy water. “Keeping germs out of the water in the first place is key to keeping everyone healthy and helping to keep the places we swim open all summer.”