

Swimming Pools: Eye, Skin, & Hair Care

As we enjoy swimming pools this summer, we will possibly be faced with eye & skin irritation, sunburn, and hair discoloration. The following is information to help prevent some of these problems from occurring.

Eye & Skin Irritation

What causes this eye & skin irritation? We have been raised hearing the phrase “too much chlorine”. This is not usually the cause of eye or skin irritation in swimming pools. Most often eye and skin irritation is caused by one of the following:

◆ Insufficient Sanitizer Levels

Although swimmers often complain that the chlorine is burning their eyes or irritating their skin, it is, in fact, usually a sign that there is not enough chlorine in the pool. When nitrogen and hypochlorous acid combine, chloramines (spent chlorine) are formed. The chloramines no longer kill bacteria and the water smells bad, giving off a chlorine-like smell. These chloramines also tend to irritate the eyes. When this occurs, you must oxidize these chloramines by the use of chlorine or a non-chlorine oxidizer. So actually when you think that a pool has too much chlorine because it is burning your eyes or you can smell it, it is most likely that it needs more chlorine (**Turbo Shock**, **Clean Shock**, **Instant Cleaning Granules**, or **Active Cleaning Granules**) or a non-chlorine (**Baquacil**) oxidizer.

◆ Incorrect pH

The recommended pH level for a

swimming pool is 7.2 to 7.6. This level is fairly easy on the eyes and skin. However, if you get outside of this recommended range, it can cause eye or skin irritation. Low pH tends to irritate the eyes and skin more than high pH.

To solve the problem of eye or skin irritation, you must first determine what is causing the problem. Bring a sample (approximately one pint) of your swimming pool water to our retail staff at Gohlke Pools. Be sure to tell them that you are experiencing eye and skin irritation and they should be able to solve your problem.

Now what to do about the irritated eyes & skin—Eye drops will usually provide relief for irritated eyes. To treat irritated skin, taking a shower and then using a moisturizing lotion will usually do the trick.

Sun Protection

Sunscreen is rated by SPF, which stands for Sun Protective Factor. This means that the higher the SPF, the longer the sun protection. Applying the sunscreen thoroughly and liberally is the key. Many times we overlook the fact that we need a waterproof sunscreen for use in pools or if we are perspiring. This is a very important consideration and must be taken into account when selecting the correct sunscreen. Men with thinning hair should be extremely careful and apply sunscreen liberally to the top of the head or wear a hat. Sunscreen should also be applied to the top of the ears even when wearing a hat. Lips are another very sensitive area that should not be overlooked. Many people tend to develop dry skin with repeated exposure to the sun and water. In the past few years pool chemicals have been developed that actually help maintain your skin's moisture. If you

prefer not to go this route, moisturizers are available that can help relieve your dry skin.

Hair Discoloration

There are shampoos and other hair care products that help remove the chlorine and other pool chemicals from your hair. If you have hair that turns green, it is not, as many believe, from the chlorine. For many years chlorine has been blamed for turning blonde hair green, but, as it turns out, the real problem is the copper in the water. If you are experiencing this problem, you should have your water tested. There are chemicals available at pool supply stores that you can apply to the pool water that help prevent green hair problems. Some everyday swimmers wet their hair with tap water before swimming believing the pool chemicals won't penetrate hair that is already saturated. To help remove much of the chemicals, it is a good idea to rinse your hair immediately after swimming.

If after trying these tips you continue having problems with the condition eye, skin, or hair, consult your physician.

BE SURE TO READ ALL LABEL DIRECTIONS BEFORE ADDING ANY PRODUCT TO YOUR SWIMMING POOL.

Note:

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-Always follow label directions and manufacturer's instructions for each product used.

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