



## What is swimmer's itch?

- Allergic reaction caused by a certain tiny parasite that burrows into the skin causing a rash. These parasites are released from infected snails but normally infect birds or mammals. It is found throughout the world and is most frequent during the summer months

## What are the symptoms?

- Tingling, burning, or itching of the skin
- Small reddish pimples
- Small blisters
- Severity of rash can vary from person-to-person
- Symptoms can worsen with reinfection

Symptoms may occur within minutes to after swimming in contaminated water.

## How is it spread?

- Direct contact with water that is contaminated with the parasite
- Parasite are more likely present in shallow water
- It is not contagious and cannot spread person-to-person

## How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Most cases do not require medical attention
- If you have a rash, try the following for relief:
  - Use Corticosteroid cream
  - Apply cool compresses to affected area
  - Soak in colloidal oatmeal baths
  - Use anti-itch lotion
- If itching become prolonged, see your doctor for additional treatment

## How can swimmer's itch be prevented?

- Avoid still pools of non-chlorinated water during the mid-summer and fall months
- Waterways, which have a higher number of ducks, geese, shore birds or snails, have a higher chance of being contaminated
- Do not feed ducks and geese, which brings them close to shore where they can spread disease
- Do not swim in areas where swimmer's itch is a known problem
- Towel dry or shower immediately after leaving the water

## Is it safe to swim in my swimming pool?

- Yes, as long as your swimming pool is well maintained and chlorinated, there is no risk
- Appropriate snails must be present in order for swimmer's itch to occur

## If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017