

# Tips to Thrive

## TO SWIM OR NOT TO SWIM

WHEN IT SEEMS THAT WINTER WILL NEVER END, IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THAT SOON YOU COULD BE LOUNGING BY THE POOL OR THE BEACH. BEFORE SWIMMING, HOWEVER, CONSUMERS WITH ENTERAL TUBES OR IV ACCESS DEVICES NEED TO ASK THE QUESTION: "IS IT SAFE TO SWIM?"

*This guide is a resource only. Always check with your physician before swimming or participating in any other water activity.*

### ENTERAL TUBES

Generally, doctors allow patients with enteral tubes to swim as long as their tube is established and the stoma site is well healed. The major consideration is the quality of the water.

Private pools with adequate chlorination and no pet usage normally are a safe bet, while rivers, lakes, and ponds are considered unsafe due to poor water quality caused by stagnancy or even fecal material from wildlife in the water.

Swimming in the ocean can be questionable, as many beaches are polluted. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website ([cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/oceans-lakes-rivers](http://cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/oceans-lakes-rivers)) provides useful information about local water quality.

### IV ACCESS DEVICES

**Non-tunneled catheters (PICC):** These lines should not be submerged in water, because bacteria can be transmitted directly into the bloodstream. There are several products that help keep peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) sites dry. DRYPro™ (for PICC lines) and XeroSox® report that they are waterproof and safe for swimming—and even surfing.

**Tunneled catheters (Hickman®, Groshong®, Broviac®):** While the chance for contamination is lower, it is imperative that the dressing remain clean and dry at all times. It also is important that the site be completely healed, which takes 6–8 weeks. A central line site that is allowed to stay moist is a breeding ground for bacteria, potentially leading to a catheter infection or other complications.

Many products are available to cover catheters, but they do not support submerging the catheter in water. The AquaGuard® is a permeable moisture barrier developed for keeping a dressing dry for showering, but it does not support a waterproof environment for swimming. Other occlusive coverings, such as OpSite® and Tegaderm™, are used as an occlusive barrier, but these also are not waterproof.

**Port-a-Cath:** This is the optimal catheter to have in place if you are an avid swimmer. If the port is not accessed, there is no restriction on swimming, as the catheter is protected/sealed under the skin. If the port is accessed with a Huber needle, then it is treated like any other tunneled catheter and must stay dry and covered.

If your physician gives the OK for swimming, the single most important thing you can do to decrease your chance of infection is to keep your site covered and dry. If the dressing is damp, it needs to be changed without delay. Trust your water source, and when in doubt, sit it out.



### CONTACT US

PHONE: 888.6.THRIVE

EMAIL: [info@thriverrx.net](mailto:info@thriverrx.net)

WEB: [thriverrx.diplomat.is](http://thriverrx.diplomat.is)

The information herein is for educational purposes only and may not be construed as medical advice. Diplomat Pharmacy Inc. takes no responsibility for the accuracy or validity of the information herein, nor the claims or statements of any manufacturer. Reference to a specific product, process, or service does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by Diplomat Pharmacy Inc., and any such reference is provided for educational purposes only.

Copyright © 2017 by Diplomat Pharmacy Inc. Diplomat, Diplomat Specialty Infusion Group, and ThriveRx are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Diplomat Pharmacy Inc. All rights reserved. THRV – 006721 – 0117

**THRIVE<sup>®</sup>Rx**  
A DIVISION OF DIPLOMAT  
SPECIALTY INFUSION GROUP™