NEW STUDY REAFFIRMS NEED TO PROPERLY MAINTAIN POOLS WITH CHLORINE

Study on Pool Sanitation Also Makes Unsubstantiated Claims about the Health Risks for Swimmers

ARLINGTON, VA (July 23, 2010) – A study published in the journal Environmental Science & Technology highlights many of the sanitary concerns the American Chemistry Council is addressing in its Healthy Pools Campaign but offers little evidence to support conclusions regarding potential health risks for swimmers.

Judith Nordgren, Managing Director of the American Chemistry Council’s Chlorine Chemistry Division, issued the following statement in response to the study:

“Chlorine is added to swimming pools around the world precisely because of its health benefits. Chlorine-based disinfectants help make swimming pools safer by destroying a wide range of microbes that cause a number of common diseases, including bacterial gastro-enteritis, athlete’s foot, dermatitis and ear infections.

“We agree that clean and healthy swimming pools should be a priority this summer season. That’s why we worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to launch our Healthy Pools Campaign. This study addresses some of these important issues. For example, the researchers highlight the essential role swimmers can play in keeping pools healthy, such as showering before swimming and refraining from peeing in the pool.

“The study suggests that various factors may influence the potential toxicity of swimming pool water (e.g., temperature, sunlight, contaminants from swimmers and treatment method). Given the small sample size and other limitations, this study does not support the authors’ assertions about which treatment methods are preferable.

“The specific assertions regarding bladder cancer are not new and remain unsubstantiated. The National Cancer Institute has stated that there is ‘no proof that chlorinated water causes bladder cancer in people.’ Furthermore, Great Britain’s National Health Service reviewed this study and subsequent media coverage of the study and found that ‘although The Daily Telegraph reports a link between chlorinated swimming pool water and a greater risk of cancer (notably bladder cancer), this particular study did not directly examine this or look at any other particular health outcomes in people. As such, it is difficult to gauge from this study the actual effects on human health.’
“The World Health Organization has long supported the use of chlorine-based pool disinfectants in eliminating waterborne germs and contaminants introduced by swimmers: ‘The risks from exposure to chlorination by-products in reasonably well managed swimming pools would be considered small and must be set against benefits of aerobic exercise and risks in the absence of disinfection.’”

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Is your pool healthy? So far, more than 40,000 Americans have requested free test strips so they can test their pool’s chlorine and pH levels. To order your free strips and learn more about the American Chemistry Council’s Healthy Pools Campaign, please visit HealthyPools.org.

http://www.americanchemistry.com

The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people’s lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care®, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a $674 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is one of the nation’s largest exporters, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation’s critical infrastructure.