



Virologists give the all-clear: no specific risk of infection in public pools

Chlorine and heat are natural enemies of viruses

The numerous headlines about the Coronavirus have also been causing uncertainty for visitors to public pools and saunas. Now, specialists are giving the all-clear. There is no specific risk of infection in pools; on the contrary, Chlorine and heat are natural enemies of viruses. Therefore, in pool water, they have no chance of survival.

According to a report in the newspaper "Stuttgarter Zeitung" on 6th March, Dr. Katja Rothfuß, Senior Physician and Coordinator of the special isolation unit at the Robert Bosch Hospital in Stuttgart, does not see swimming pools as "places of increased risk of infection from the Coronavirus". In the report, Matthias Trautmann of Stuttgart Clinic adds that the chlorination of pool water kills viruses. Furthermore, "the dilution of a few viruses in more than a thousand litres of pool water is so high that infection is not possible". Trautmann, who heads the Institute of Hospital Hygiene, even advises that people continue swimming regularly for health reasons. As always, it is, of course, important to follow the general hygiene rules (take a thorough shower before using a pool and always wash your hands after going to the toilet).

Also, the physician Dr. Christoph Specht, known as the "TV Doctor", who, as a specialist tropical and travel physician, is an expert in infectious diseases and since 2005 has been doing regular humanitarian work in the fight against HIV and tuberculosis in Africa, states clearly in a blog post for Therme Erding: "I completely exclude infection or transmission through water".

Swimming pools themselves are not specific places with a higher risk of infection, says Dr. Specht: "We can become infected anywhere where many people gather and are in close proximity to each other. This is all the more true in public transport, where the possible transmission of viruses or risk of infection due to close contact with others is quite likely. There is no specific risk of infection in swimming pools. The bus ride to a spa is certainly associated with a higher risk of infection than a visit to a spa itself. In particular, the temperature of a pool is a decisive factor. We know that coronaviruses, like all other common cold viruses, love cold temperatures and do not tolerate heat well".

Therefore, if the generally applicable hygiene rules are adhered to, according to the specialists, the visit to a waterpark or spa is not associated with an increased risk of infection; in fact, they even recommend regularly swimming and going to a sauna, as it strengthens the body's natural defences and can prevent colds and other infectious diseases.

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