



For immediate release:

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From: Public Information Officer Zachary Gately

Notice of Swimmers Itch in Plumas County

Swimmers Itch has been reported in Plumas County waters including Lake Almanor, Graeagle Mill Pond, and other local lakes. Swimmer's itch is caused by an allergic reaction to parasites found in some birds and mammals. Humans can be exposed to the parasites when working, wading or swimming in lakes and streams. The parasites are released into fresh and salt water from infected snails. Rather than finding a host bird or animal the parasite burrows into the skin of a nearby swimmer's skin causing an allergic reaction and rash. Though anyone exposed is at risk, young children swimming or playing in shallow water are especially at risk.

Symptoms of swimmer's itch include an itching or stinging sensation of the skin that may begin within minutes after swimming. A skin eruption similar to an insect bite with a reddish rash may also appear later. In sensitive persons, intense itching and small blisters may appear. Symptoms usually lessen after a week.

If you get symptoms of swimmer's itch, over-the-counter treatments, including anti-itching ointment and corticosteroid cream, cool compresses to the affected areas, and oatmeal baths may provide relief from itching. Try not to scratch because this may cause the rash to become infected. Call your doctor if symptoms persist.

To Reduce the Likelihood of Developing Swimmer's Itch:

- Avoid swimming in areas with heavy aquatic weeds or snails, areas frequented by large numbers of ducks or geese, and avoid still pools of non-chlorinated water during the mid-summer and fall months, especially on warm days.
- Swim in deeper water away from the shore if you are a good swimmer.
- Toweling off immediately after swimming or wading may reduce the risk.
- Shower as soon as possible after a swim.
- Don't encourage birds to stay near swimming areas by feeding them.

For more information on swimmer's itch please contact Plumas County Public Health Clinic at (530) 283 6330 or (800) 801-6330.