

CAUSES OF ALGAE IN POOLS



Why is algae in the pool or what causes algae to grow? Cyanobacteria algae occurs naturally, and is contained in nearly all soil and plant debris. Algae spores can also blow into the pool, or can even be introduced by contaminated ocean swimwear. In short, *algae are always in the pool*, and can bloom into a visible colony when conditions are right:

- Poor water **circulation**; low flow or dead spots in the pool
- Poor water **balance**; pH, Alkalinity, Calcium and Cyanuric levels
- Poor water **sanitation**; low or inconsistent chlorine levels
- Poor water **filtration**; short filter run times or an ineffective filter

Any combination of the above factors can allow algae to take a foothold, sometimes in just a few hours on a warm summer day. Using a [high quality pool algaecide](#) regularly can provide insurance against those inevitable problems that cause circulation, filtration or sanitation to drop below critical levels.

HOW TO KILL ALGAE IN POOLS



How do you Kill Algae? Pool algae treatments require that your **circulation, water balance, sanitation and filtration** all be working at their best, or with most potency. A clean pool is also important, vacuum and skim the pool to remove large debris before treating for algae.

Small, isolated blooms can be treated locally with granular chlorine or a good quality pool algaecide, followed by a stiff brushing. Algae growing over larger sections of the pool, or suspended in the water will require a strong dose of chlorine [pool shock](#), or granular chlorine, to kill the algae.

1. **Balance pool**; pH 7.2, Alkalinity 80-100, and Cyanuric Acid 30-50
2. **Shock pool** to a level of *30 ppm* with 4 lbs pool shock per 10000 gals
3. **Brush pool** thoroughly to disrupt the algae and disperse the shock
4. **Run filter** 18-24 hours per day, cleaning as needed to maintain flow
5. Add a **clarifier** if needed, to restore water clarity and help your filter
6. Add an **algaecide**, but only after chlorine level drops below *5 ppm*

POOL ALGAE TREATMENT TIPS

- Vinyl pools should pre-dissolve Cal Hypo shock before adding to the pool. Fill a *clean* 5-gal bucket full of pool water, and pour in 2-3 lbs of pool shock. Stir with a suitable paddle continuously for 1 minute, then walk the solution around the edge, pouring it into the pool.
- Test your pool pH and chlorine levels several times over the next few days. The chlorine level will be off the chart for the first day, but after 24-48 hours the level should drop into measureable ranges.

- If your chlorine level is near zero after only 12-24 hours, repeat steps 1-3 above, with a stronger chlorine dose. For visible algae in a pool with high chlorine, remember that you must reach 30 ppm to kill algae. If you have algae even with high chlorine, or the water still looks green-ish, repeat steps 1-3 above.
- Continue to brush the pool and run the filter as much as possible over the next several days, backwashing or cleaning the filter as needed. Shocking a pool to remove algae typically leaves behind a dusty white residue. Vacuum the pool to remove the dust and restore water clarity.
- [Pool Clarifiers](#) can be used to improve water clarity after shocking a pool, and help small or ineffective pool filters manage the clean-up. [Pool algaecides](#) can be disrupted or destroyed by high levels of chlorine; wait until the level subsides before adding algaecide to prevent future algae blooms.
- After cleaning up a large algae bloom, use a [pool filter cleaner](#) to remove algae that has mixed with dirt, oils and scale. Filter sand, cartridges and DE grids can harbor algae cells, clinging to life. For severe pool algae cases, replace the filter media ([sand](#), [cartr](#)s, [grid](#)s) immediately after algae removal.

HOW TO PREVENT ALGAE IN POOLS



How do you control or prevent algae? Pool algae prevention also requires that your **circulation, water balance, sanitation and filtration** are all in full operation. If one of these is underperforming or inconsistent, it makes a good environment for algae to bloom.

The best way to prevent algae in pools is with consistent chlorine levels of 2-4 ppm, with long, effective daily filter runs, good water balance, and weekly use of a good pool algaecide. In short, you can control and prevent algae in pools if you *create a harsh environment for algae*:

- Good **water balance**; pH 7.2, Alk 100 ppm, Cal 200 ppm, Cya 30-50
- Good **water filtration**; two turnovers per day, 16-18 hours total run time
- Good **water circulation**; brushing, eyeball fittings, pool cleaners can help
- Good **water sanitation**; keep consistent daily chlorine levels of 2-4 ppm
- Supplemental Sanitizers can help; Minerals, Ozone or UV treatment
- Good quality pool algaecide; weekly maintenance doses

POOL ALGAE HEALTH ISSUES



Is algae in the pool harmful, or can you swim in a pool with algae? You can, but you may not want to, especially for young children, or others with under developed or compromised immune systems.

Small patches of algae here or there is not a health concern, but if the pool is having a full blown algae bloom, with low water clarity and low chlorine levels, it may not be healthy for swimming.

If the chlorine is not killing the harmless cyanobacteria algae, the chlorine is probably also not killing harmful pathogenic bacteria that may also be present in the water.