

Guide to Swimmer's Itch (Duck Mites)

What is swimmer's itch?

Swimming in natural outdoor water can occasionally result in swimmer's itch, a harmless skin irritation, caused by an allergic reaction to a type of tiny flatworm that is found naturally in open water (commonly referred to as duck mites). People swimming in the same water can have very different reactions – most have none at all. **Swimmer's itch is not related to water quality** and can occur even where water quality is rated Excellent under EU bathing water standards.

How can I reduce the likelihood of swimmer's itch?

While swimmer's itch cannot always be prevented, the following simple steps may help reduce the likelihood of irritation:

- Wear a wetsuit where appropriate to reduce direct skin exposure.
- Shower promptly after your swim (particularly before entering the sauna)
- Towel dry your skin vigorously and thoroughly after swimming.
- Remove wet swimwear promptly after your swim.
- Rinse your swimwear or wetsuit with fresh, clean water after use.

What should I do if I develop swimmer's itch?

Swimmer's itch usually gets better without treatment and typically resolves within 1–3 weeks. If you experience irritation:

- Avoid scratching the affected area, as this can increase the risk of infection.
- Wash and dry your skin thoroughly if you haven't already done so.
- Aqueous Calamine Cream or Aloe Gel can help relieve the itching
- If you're unsure whether you have swimmer's itch, your symptoms get worse, or you feel unwell after swimming, seek advice from your GP or pharmacist.

Water Quality at Sea Lanes Canary Wharf

Whether you're swimming in our outdoor pool or the wider dock, both are fed from the same water source. Eden Dock is an enclosed waterway that has been shut off from the surrounding docklands and River Thames, with naturally filtered groundwater that travels through layers of chalk, Thanet sand, alluvial clays and gravel. Eden Dock has a long-standing record of Excellent water quality, and we routinely test the water in line with [EU Bathing Water Standards](#). Swimmer's itch is not linked to water quality and can occur even where water quality is rated Excellent.

For the latest water quality results at Sea Lanes Canary Wharf visit:

<https://sealanescanarywharf.co.uk/water-quality/>