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Swim Safely This Summer: Why To Worry About Chlorine And Where to Go Instead

And while we're on the topic of salt: What's a safer alternative to heavily-chlorinated pools this summer? Pools employing alternative filtration systems, such as salt and other natural elements instead. At least two commercial pools in NJ have made the switch from harsh chemicals to natural elements. 24-Hour Fitness in Hasbrouck Heights uses salt and [CGI Holistic Fitness](#) in Closter uses natural sands and stones.

"If you swim in chlorinated water for extended periods of time, your skin will become itchy and dry, your hair becomes brittle," says Wendy Hall, general manager of CGI Holistic. "Young children are even more delicate and unprotected than adults, so our pool is a much safer and more enjoyable place for kids to learn to swim. We conducted a lot of research to determine the best way to reduce the use of chlorine so that our members could enjoy swimming without its harmful effects."

CGI Holistic uses a double water filtration system which uses natural elements such as stones and sand to filter and cleanse the water, says Hall. "Consequently the water is almost potable! We do have to use small amounts of chlorine, but compared to typical public pools your swim experience will be extremely enjoyable and almost completely chemical free."

Chlorine has long been known for its toxic health effects. Chlorine gas in its pure form can cause symptoms ranging from irritation of the eyes, to coughing and vomiting, and even to death. While chlorine in a pool is diluted, think about all the times your child swallows water while swimming. Studies show swallowing and breathing in chlorine can lead to long term chronic health problems, including asthma. Plus, there's no way to really know how the chlorine is being regulated within the pool. What to do when swimming in the town pool is the only choice? Shower (preferably with soap) immediately after a swim. Or, better yet, find a clean natural water source like a lake.