



Aquatic Consulting Services

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Pool Tip #21: Swimming Immediately After Eating

Was your mother right? Is it dangerous to swim after eating? Do you really have to wait at least thirty minutes after eating to avoid stomach cramps and possibly drowning?

This "old wives" tale has been around for quite some time and has been perpetuated generation after generation by well meaning, but incorrectly informed, parents. There is not even one recorded case of anyone experiencing stomach cramps and drowning while swimming immediately after eating. As a matter of fact, long distance swimmers eat while in the water swimming their endurance events.

Consumption of low fat, high carbohydrate foods can be nutritionally beneficial to elite competitive swimmers. However, not eating at all, or eating particular foods immediately before swimming will neither harm nor enhance the swimming ability of most typical recreational swimmers.

Engaging in intense exercise immediately after eating a heavy meal is not beneficial to proper digestion. You shouldn't try to run a marathon immediately after consuming a Thanksgiving feast, nor should you compete in a long distance competitive swimming event. However, it wouldn't hurt to go for a short walk around the block after a moderate meal, and neither would it be dangerous to swim a few laps. Just use common sense to decide when it's appropriate to swim after eating.