

# AMOEBA

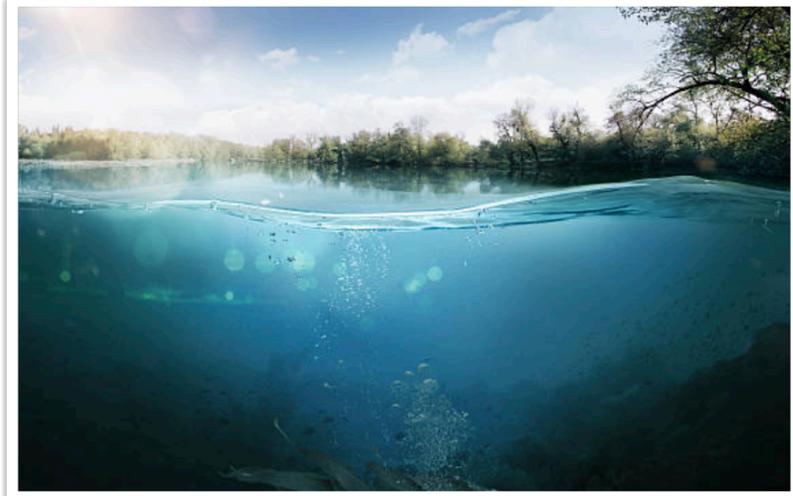
*Amebic encephalitis "brain-eating amoeba"*

## Amoeba - Basics

- Free-living amoebae are found during spring and summer in warm freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, hot springs, and warm coastal waters
- Infection can occur after swimming, diving, bathing in warm, stagnant water, or via contaminated contact lens cleaning solution.
- Infection may also occur from poorly chlorinated swimming pool water. One cannot get infected via swallowing contaminated water.
- Amoebae migrate to the brain through the nose and cause inflammation and death of brain cells.

## Symptoms

- Severe frontal headache, high fever, altered smell or taste, nausea, vomiting
- Sensitivity to light, stiff neck, behavioral changes, drowsiness, hallucinations, seizures, coma



## Symptoms and Prevention Strategies

- Avoid diving and jumping into warm, stagnant freshwaters.
- Verify adequate chlorination of swimming pools.
- Limit the amount of water going up the nose, use nose plugs for unavoidable exposures.
- Remove contact lenses before activity involving contact with water, replace contacts as prescribed, and clean contact lenses as instructed by manufacturer.
- Early diagnosis and treatment is crucial as it may increase chances for survival! Infection is almost always fatal due to delayed diagnosis and poor response to therapy. Delayed treatment leads to seizures, coma, permanent brain damage, and death.