

# the healthy swimmer



## Minorities Still Playing Catch-Up

Despite efforts to increase minority participation, aquatic organizations say minority groups still lag far behind whites in their ability to swim. Drowning is three times more common among African-American 5 to 14 year olds than it is among whites the same age, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. A study by the USA Swimming Foundation revealed that inadequate pool access and the lack of a tradition of aquatics leaves African-American children only half as likely as whites to learn how to swim.

To continue its efforts to change these statistics, the foundation is giving \$50,000 during 2010 to local learn-to-swim programs that target minority populations – principally African-Americans and Hispanics. The funds were made available through the foundation's Make a Splash program, a child-focused water safety initiative aimed at teaching kids to swim and educating parents about water safety.

Olympic Gold Medalist **Cullen Jones**, an African-American, teamed up with the USA Swimming Foundation to tour six cities this past sum-

mer in an effort to increase public awareness of the program. Sponsored by energy giant ConocoPhillips, the tour was dubbed "Make a Splash with Cullen Jones." Jones, who won a gold medal in the 4x100 freestyle relay in Beijing, says he learned to swim after nearly drowning in a water park in New Jersey when he was 5.

In 2008, USA Swimming Foundation hired the University of Memphis to conduct a study of minority children in six U.S. cities to determine the barriers that prevent them from learning to swim. The survey results from more than 1,700 respondents confirmed what the foundation suspected – that many lack access to swimming pools, and many have parents who fear the water and worry about their children's safety around water.

Thus far, the four-year-old Make a Splash program has provided opportunities for kids to learn to swim through its 97 local partner clubs in 31 states. More than 142,000 children have taken lessons through Make a Splash local partners. <<<

>>> For information go to [swimfoundation.org/](http://swimfoundation.org/) / [Page.aspx?pid=261](http://Page.aspx?pid=261).

## Train Your Brain?

Studies on aging and Alzheimer's Disease differ on the ability of mental exercises to stave off age-related cognitive decline and AD. Early studies showed correlation, but recent research raises more questions.

One early study of aging nuns noticed a correlation between nuns who did crossword puzzles every day and their tendency to live longer without cognitive impairment. Sue Halpern of Middlebury College in Vermont and author of "Can't Remember What I Forgot: The Good News From The Front Lines of Memory Research," writes, "The correlation could have come from a different cause altogether: that those nuns who did the crossword puzzle were always more verbally and mentally endowed, which is what kept them from succumbing to cognitive decline."

New research would seem to agree. One study at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis found that seniors with the most years of formal education fared the best on tests that measured memory and learning. Cognitive reserve theory posits that mental reserves built up early in life can help decrease the risk of AD.

Education can include learning a language, playing music, doing puzzles and trying new tasks. Researchers now believe that mental activity in early life is more important for preventing AD than doing crossword puzzles in later life.

## New Guidelines for Pool Chemicals

Despite clear evidence that chemicals for treating pool water can help prevent illnesses from water-borne germs, people who treat pools with these chemicals can suffer serious injuries unless they use the proper methods and safety equipment, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. This past November, the CDC published new "Recommendations for Preventing Pool Chemical-Associated Injuries."

The PDF document covers proper storage and security of pool chemicals, maintenance of equipment, proper application and handling, training for pool staffers, and what to do if there is an accidental spill or improper application. Some specific recommendations are:

- Install an alarm to alert staff when the recirculation pump fails.
- Childproof chemical storage areas.
- Use separate, dedicated scoops, crocks and



Pete/gar

lids for each type of chemical.

- Post clear instructions on when to close the pool for improper water quality.
- Develop an emergency plan that includes spill clean-up instructions. <<<
- >>> For more information, go to [cdc.gov/healthyswimming](http://cdc.gov/healthyswimming).

## Need Omega-3? Go Eat Some Algae!

Nutritionists today generally agree that everyone needs some fat to stay healthy. The USDA says that 20 to 30 percent of an adult's total calories should come from "good" fats. Bad fats (saturated and trans fats) increase health risks. Good fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats) lower risks.

One of the most important good fats is omega-3. Fish are a huge source of omega-3 fats. But what about those people who don't like, or are allergic to, seafood? According to nutritionists at Purdue University, walnuts, and canola, soybean and flaxseed oils are also good sources. Now, algae also can be used as a source of omega-3.

Today, many food products also are fortified with the three main omega-3 fatty acids: ALA (alpha-linolenic acid), DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid). Of those, DHA and EPA are the most active and reportedly offer more health benefits. Vegetarians without egg restrictions can consume eggs and yogurt fortified with DHA. Soymilk has naturally occurring ALA and some soymilks have also been fortified with DHA.

Concentrated supplements from algae are a recent development in response to demand for vegetarian omega-3 sources. A British company, Water 4 Investment Ltd., offers a capsule under the brand name V-Pure that contains 50 mg of EPA and 350 mg of DHA. The supplements are available online at [v-pure.com](http://v-pure.com).

Purdue University nutritionists Heather Hutchens and Dr. Bruce Watkins, of the Omega-3 Learning Consortium, offer this list of vegetarian foods with high omega-3 content.

Food Product	Total Omega-3 (mg)*	ALA	EPA	DHA
Walnuts (1/4 cup)	627	627	-	-
Flax cereal (3/4 cup)	1,000	1,000	-	-
Fortified yogurt (4 oz)	16-32	-	-	16-32
Fortified eggs (1 egg)	100-150	48	2	50-150
Butter substitutes (1 Tbs)	500-560	350	32	-
Fortified milk (8 oz)	32	-	-	32
Fortified soymilk (8 oz)	-	370	-	32
Fortified orange juice (8 oz)	50	-	30	20

\*Omega-3 fatty acid content and source varies by brand; be sure to read labels carefully or contact the manufacturer.

### Abbreviations:

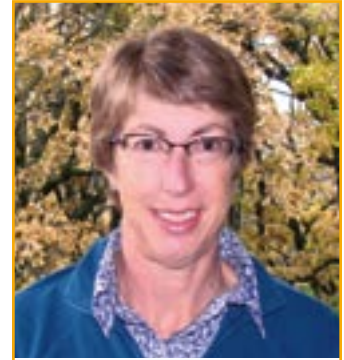
Mg = milligrams (1,000 mg is equal to 1 gram and about 28 grams are in one ounce)

ALA = alpha-linolenic acid

EPA = eicosapentaenoic acid

DHA = docosahexaenoic acid

Copyright 2009. Purdue University. Adapted from original: [omega3learning.purdue.edu](http://omega3learning.purdue.edu)



## Crosswords for the Brain

Although crossword puzzles may not stave off Alzheimer's, they can be pleasurable, entertaining and enrich your vocabulary. Nancy Kryka, Minnesota Masters, recently retired from IBM, where she worked for 30 years as a financial analyst and a software engineer. She decided to start writing swim puzzles after her son gave her the DVD "Wordplay." Kryka, 54, has been a swim coach, instructor, official and a swim parent. She has USMS Top 10 achievements and a FINA Masters Top 10 achievement in the 50-meter fly.

Kryka has contributed six crossword puzzles with swimming themes to *SWIMMER* for 2010. In this issue, and each subsequent issue this year, a link will be posted in The Healthy Swimmer department that will direct to a PDF download that can be printed and completed. See the first puzzle and puzzle answers at [usmsswimmer.com](http://usmsswimmer.com). <<<

The information in this department is not intended as a substitute for professional or medical advice. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters. For personal medical advice, consult your healthcare provider. If you are concerned about a particular medical condition or injury, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and care.