

Tips to Understanding Pool Water Ph & Chemistry: Cyanuric & Hypochlorous Acid, Chlorine, Bacteria

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You Can't Care for a Pool Until You Learn the Lingo

If you know what cyanuric acid, hypochlorous acid, muriatic acid, chloramines, and nitrates are and why they matter to pools off the top of your head, you probably either take care of pools for a living or have way too much free time on your hands. Most people, however, have forgotten their high school chemistry long before buying their first house. By the time we've finally gotten the pool we've always wanted? Forget it. Without knowing what all the chemistry jargon means, shopping for pool care chemicals can be an absolute nightmare. You can't take care of a pool until you know what it is you are addressing.

Without knowing what pool care terms mean, the best case scenario is that you spend a little too much on the wrong supplies. Worst case scenario? The pool's pH falls out of balance and you end up with burning red eyes, itchy skin, and faded bathing suits. Maybe you'll wind up with a green slurry of algae water, or hard calcium deposits. Both of those are going to mean lots of time, effort, and money just trying to get your pool swimmable again. To save some trouble, here's your refresher course:

Pool Water Chemistry Glossary

- **Algae**- Green one-cell plants that grow in water.
- **Algaecides**- Chemicals designed to kill algae and prevent the growth of more algae.
- **Bacteria**- Microscopic organisms, also known as germs, which cause sickness.
- **Chloramines**- A form of chlorine created by the oxidation of impurities. It can cause irritation of the eyes and gives off a chlorine-like odor.
- **Chlorine**- The most often used disinfectant for cleaning swimming pools.
- **Chlorine Demand**- Materials in swimming pool water that use up chlorine. This includes microbes like bacteria and algae, as well as dirt, leaves, grass and oils from the skin of swimmers.
- **Chlorine residual**- The amount of chlorine in the pool after the chlorine demand has been met; this is the actual measurement of chlorine disinfectant.
- **Cyanuric Acid**- A type of stabilizer that helps chlorine last longer. Also called conditioner.
- **Free Chlorine**- Also known as Hypochlorous acid and hypochlorite. The chlorine that actively kills microbes like algae and bacteria and keeps your pool clean and clear.
- **Hypochlorous acid**- Chlorine's active form in pool water. The liquid agent that does the disinfecting and sanitizing. See Free Chlorine.
- **Muriatic Acid**- An acid that lowers the pH or total Alkalinity of pool water.
- **Nitrates**- The nutrient that Algae feeds on.

- **pH-** stands for *potentia hydrogeni* or potential hydrogen. It is a measure of the acidity of the water.
- **Phosphates-** The food of Algae.
- **PPM-** Stands for Parts per million. The normal measure of a material concentration in the swimming pool.
- **Shock Treatment-** The same as Super-chlorination.
- **Stabilizer-** A material that makes chlorine in pool water last longer by slowing decay caused by sunlight.
- **Super-Chlorination-** Also known as shock treatment. Adding 5 to 10 times the normal amount of sanitizer to kill off Algae or to prevent issues after severe rain or heavy bather loads.
- **Total Alkalinity-** Water's ability to resist sharp pH changes or spikes.
- **Total Chlorine-** The amount amount of free chlorine and combined chlorine together.
- **Water Hardness-** The amount of calcium or magnesium dissolved in the water.

Speak With the Pool Experts About Your Pool's Care

Knowing about pool chemistry is only a starting place. Even with a strong understanding of how pool chemistry works, pool maintenance can be a chore. Keeping your pool's pH in its ideal range can be a delicate process, and a mistake can leave your pool useless for days. The best route is to speak to a professional about how to best maintain your pool and how using a salt water system can improve your pool's chemistry. A Kool Pool is the place to go for professional and reliable pool services in the Coachella Valley and surrounding areas. A Kool Pool specializes in salt water systems, which is better at maintaining your pool's chemistry and is safer than using chlorine. To learn more about pool maintenance or to get the best service for your little slice of heaven, visit www.akoolpool.biz, email akoolpoolserv@aol.com, or call 760-773-0135.