



REACTIONS

Yes, It's Ok to Pee in the Sea

And why does it smell like sweaty socks?!

1. Urine is a lot like the ocean

The amount of urea in our pee is negligible compared to the sea's volume. Even if everyone in the world peed in the Atlantic Ocean, urea would still be just.

2. UREA is just a drop in the ocean

Plus, urea is a way for our bodies to get rid of extra nitrogen from breaking down proteins. Nitrogen is a great source of food for marine plant life.

3. Everyone Pees!

All the animals living in the ocean pee in the ocean, too! We're not alone.

P(EE)SA

Though it's OK to pee in the ocean, DO NOT pee in protected areas like coral reefs, smaller bodies of water and especially not in swimming pools!

The nitrogen-containing molecules we release (like urea) can react with pool disinfectants (chlorine or bromine). This reaction produces volatile molecules that can irritate our eyes, nose and lungs.

Coral reefs are fragile and very sensitive to extra nutrient input. Since pee is essentially fertilizer, it can disrupt the ecosystem.

* How much pee does a fin whale release each time it goes?

Sources:

<http://cenblog.org/newscrips/2013/07/to-pee-or-not-to-pee-that-is-the-chemsummer-question/>

<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/acs.estlett.7b00043>

Created by ACS with assistance from Shannon Ryan, ACS Productions.

American Chemical Society

1155 Sixteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 T [202] 872-6042 F [202] 872 4370 www.acs.org