

Algae Treatment

Algae comes in many varieties in a swimming pool. The most common are green and yellow (mustard) algae. There are also black and pink algae. For now we will concentrate on green and mustard algae.

Algae is a plant life that can be killed by chlorine. It can also be eliminated by copper. Some of the more potent algaecides have copper as their active ingredient. If you choose to use these algaecides, you **MUST** follow the directions carefully because it can kill other plants and fish when you discharge your pool water during the backwash cycle and/or when you vacuum to waste. Many of these products' usage is regulated by the FDA and EPA.

Some algaecides on the market are not very effective in eliminating algae but are more for prevention. And there are other products that are designed to enhance the effectiveness of chlorine to kill the algae and are not stand-alone products.

In order to keep this simple and relatively inexpensive, you can use **ONLY** chlorine to get rid of—and prevent—algae. Here is how it is done.

First you will need granular chlorine for shocking the pool. Note, all chlorine products are not the same. You need Calcium Hypochlorite* for shocking. (See note at the end of this detailing why this is the product to use.)

Spotty Algae: At the first sign of algae, where it is only spotty and does not cover the entire pool, shock your pool according to the prescribed dosage for the total gallons of water in your pool. (Most Chlorine shocks have a dosage chart on the label.) Immediately following the shock, brush the algae areas vigorously. This breaks the plant free from the floor/walls and allows it to come into contact with the chlorine shock. Continually filter the pool for the next 24 hours.

After 24 hours, backwash your sand or D.E. filter. In the case of cartridge filters, take them out and hose them down. You probably will see dead algae on the bottom of the pool. This needs to be vacuumed to “waste” setting on your filter's multi-port valve. If you have a cartridge filter, most likely the builder has plumbed in a valve to allow you to vacuum your pool to waste. Open that valve. It is important that you **Do Not** vacuum the pool on the filter cycle. Algae is a spore and is so small it will pass through most filter medias and be right back in your pool after vacuuming on the normal filter cycle.

Major Algae: When the pool has turn green due to an algae bloom, or you can see algae over much of the floor/walls, *there is a procedure we find works best to turn the pool around.* Before outlining this procedure other methods may be necessary under certain circumstances.

There are many ways to reach a final destination. But you should never try to take two or three different routes at the same time. Stick with one until you get there. It is the same with algae treatment. Different products will do the trick but do not mix and match. Certain steps in one algae treatment may work against steps in another treatment method. Here are some different approaches that work for getting rid of algae.

Last resort—Short on time—Got a party tomorrow Method: When you absolutely have no choice because of the embarrassment that a green pool will cause for a planned event, you can use a **flocculent product** to kill the algae and do a follow up vacuum on the waste cycle. It cannot be stressed enough that *this is a last resort effort*, just short of emptying your pool, to try to make a dramatic improvement in a short time period. A flocculating product is like a gelatin, that when squirted or poured into the pool, helps combine the algae spores into bigger particles and then drops them to the floor, to be removed through a vacuum on the “Waste” setting on your multi-port. When this works, as desired, you can get good results within 24 hrs.

Warning: THIS METHOD RARELY WORKS AND USUALLY MAKES THE SITUATION SO BAD THAT DRAINING MUCH OF THE POOL IS NECESSARY. In our 29 years of pool service we have resorted to this method only 4 times. However, we have had to clean up countless pools where home owners tried a flocculent method on their own with terrible outcomes. Since we do not advise this for standard algae treatment, we will not go into a detailed description here of how to get best results using flocculants. If you go this route, follow exactly the label on the product you are using.

Liquid Algaecide Treatments: There are many liquid algaecides on the market that will work to treat algae. The most effective liquid algaecides have copper as their basic kill ingredient. This is another method we rarely recommend due to the expense of the products. We have a rule of thumb: *Do not buy anything sold in a small container from a pool store.* Liquid algaecides fit this rule. Anything these can do to rid your pool of algae, granular chlorine can do as well-if not better-at a cheaper cost (sometimes at a much cheaper cost). Since we do not advise liquid algaecides for standard algae treatment, we will not go into a detailed description here of how to get best results using them. If you go this route, follow exactly the label on the product you are using.

We recommend the following method for a very reliable and affordable solution to your major algae problem.

Granular Chlorine Treatment: Once the algae has gotten out of control in your pool, it will get worse at a rapid rate. You must use a granular chlorine product known as **Cal-Hypo (Calcium hypochlorite)** to eliminate the algae. NOTE: Granular di-chlor products and tri-chlor chlorine tablets Will Not be effective in treating algae once it has bloomed in your pool (see note below for explanation).

1. Stop using chlorine tablets or any form of ionization during the algae treatment process.
2. Shock your pool with 4x the recommended dosage for your pool's total gallons.
3. Brush your entire pool and keep the circulation setting on "Filter".
4. No swimming on this first day.

Day 2

1. Backwash your filter. (Cartridge filters must be hosed off.)
2. If you can see the bottom of your pool, vacuum to "Waste" (Never vacuum algae on regular "Filter" cycle. It will only spread the algae.)
3. If pool is perfectly cleared up that is all there is.
3b. If pool is still greenish, or cloudy blue, shock pool with 2x the recommended dosage for your pool's total gallons.
4. DO NOT brush this second day. Leave circulation on filter

Day 3 (if needed) Follow the directions for Day 2 until you get to step 3b. If your pool is still cloudy or slightly hazy shock your pool with the recommended dosage for a normal shock for your pool's total gallons.

Day 4 (if still not perfect) follow Day 2 directions, until step 3b. This day shock with only $\frac{1}{2}$ the recommended dosage of shock.

Day 5 The pool should be back to normal and you should begin your regular standard chemical regimen for sanitizing your water. If it is still not looking good, call us for a consultation. It could be a filtration issue that is causing the problem.

*Note: Chlorine tablets are tri-chlor, that is a 3 molecule chlorine component. These are good for regular sanitization but are poorly suited for fast growing algae. This chlorine is too bulky and ineffective for algae-fighting. The same is true for di-chlor products. They are 2 molecule chlorine components. They too, are slow acting and ineffective in killing algae. Calcium Hypochlorite is a mono-chlore molecule. It is fast acting, here today-gone tomorrow chlorine molecule. It is the best algae fighter on the market. It is also good for regular pool shocking and algae prevention.