

Daily shower may make you ill

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Study: Showerheads Harbour Bacteria Dangerous For Some

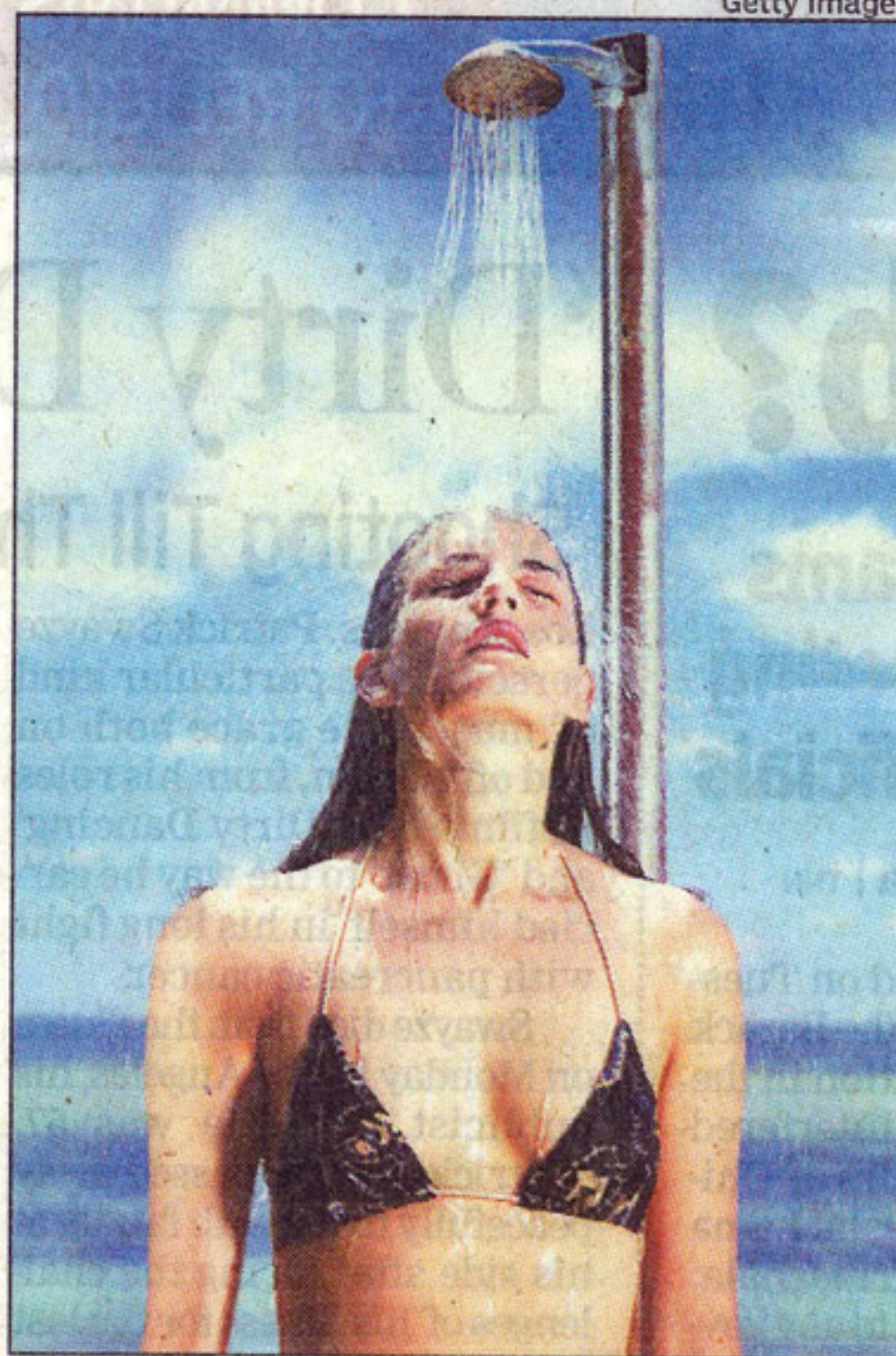
Washington: In what may be the scariest shower news since Alfred Hitchcock's 'Psycho', a study says showerheads can harbor tiny bacteria that come spraying into your face when you wash.

Researchers at Colorado University have found that daily shower could be bad for health as it delivers a cloud of dangerous germs into your face and lungs. They say showerheads are breeding grounds for bacteria and when water is passed through them, they blast out the bugs, which could cause respiratory problems such as dry coughs.

Lead researcher Norman Pace said: "If you are getting a face full of water when you first turn your shower on, that means you are probably getting high load of *Mycobacterium avium*, which may not be too healthy. There have been some precedents for concern regarding pathogens and shower heads. But until this study we did not know just how much concern."

For their study, the researchers tested some 45 shower heads from nine cities across America and found 30% contain high amounts of a pathogen — or organism — that causes the lung infection *mycobacterium avium*.

The findings support previous studies suggesting lung infections could be on the rise in the developed world because of increased use of showers. Co-researcher Leah Feazel



BACTERIAL BATH? Showers deliver a cloud of dangerous germs to your face and lungs

said that taking a bath was a failsafe way of avoiding infection and changing showerheads every few months was also effective. Stepping outside the room for a minute after turning the shower on can also reduce the likelihood of inhaling germs that get pushed out of the shower head with the first burst of water.

Chlorine in pools ups allergy risks

New York: Swimming in chlorinated pools may increase the risk of a child getting asthma and respiratory allergies like hay fever, according to a Belgian study.

Researchers from the Catholic University of Louvain in Brussels, found that teenagers who spent more than 100 hours in chlorinated pools were up to six times more at risk of having asthma than others. "The impact of these chemicals on the respiratory health of children and adolescents appears to be much more important — at least by a factor of five — than that associated with secondhand smoke," toxicology professor Alfred Bernard said.

In the study, Bernard compared the health of 733 teenagers aged 13 to 18 who swam in chlorinated pools for various amounts of time with that of 114 teens who used pools sanitized with a mix of copper and silver. Among teens who swam in chlorinated pools for between 100-500 hours, 22 children out of 369, or 6%, had current asthma, compared with only 2 of 144, or 1.8%, of those who had spent less than 100 hours in chlorinated pools. REUTERS

People with normal immune systems have little to fear, but these microbes — *Mycobacterium avium*, which have been linked to lung disease in some — could be a concern for folks with cystic fibrosis or AIDS, people who are undergoing cancer treatment or those who have had a recent organ transplant. AGENCIES