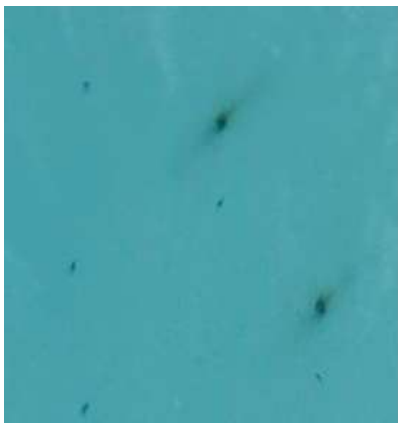


INFO SHEET

*Performance Through
Technology and Service*

Black spots on a fiberglass pool surface and how to remove them? (What is the cause?)



“BLACK SPOTS” IN FIBREGLASS POOLS

What they really are — and what you should do about them

Have you noticed a black mark on your fibreglass pool surface?

If it also feels like a **small depression, pit, or blister**, it may be more than a simple stain or algae.

In fibreglass pools, so-called “**black spot**” may be linked to one of four issues:

1. **Surface Black Spot**

A dark mark or patch on the surface that may feel rough, pitted, or slightly sunken.

2. **Osmosis**

A moisture-related problem inside the fibreglass shell that causes bubbles, blisters, soft spots, and surface breakdown.

3. **Cobalt Staining**

Dark grey or black staining associated with deterioration in older fibreglass resin systems.

4. **Algae-Induced Black Spot**

A true algae infestation that attaches to the pool surface and can be very stubborn to remove.

WHAT DOES BLACK SPOT LOOK LIKE?

Black spot in a fibreglass pool often appears as a **small dark dot or patch**, sometimes with a slight hollow underneath. Unlike normal surface dirt, it may seem to be **in the surface rather than on it**.

Common signs include:

- Small black or dark grey marks
- Tiny depressions or pits
- Blistered or rough-feeling patches
- Spots that do not brush off easily
- Marks that return after treatment

IS IT REALLY ALGAE?

Not always.

In concrete or plaster pools, black spot is often a form of algae. But in a **fibreglass pool**, black spotting is often more likely to be linked to **surface damage, osmosis, or internal staining**. Still, genuine black algae can occur, so it is important to tell the difference before treatment.

ALGAE-INDUCED BLACK SPOT IN FIBREGLASS POOLS

Cause

This is a real algae problem rather than a structural defect. Black algae is stubborn because it forms a protective outer layer and can hold tightly to the pool surface. In roughened or damaged fibreglass areas, it may be easier for the algae to anchor and keep returning. Black spot algae is known for having a root-like holdfast, which is why it is harder to shift than ordinary green algae.

What it looks like

- Small black dots or dark colonies on the surface
- Spots that remain after normal chlorination
- Areas that may feel slightly rough
- Usually sits **on** the surface, though older infestations can settle into worn areas and look embedded

How it is different

Unlike osmosis or cobalt staining, algae-induced black spot is a **living infestation**. It does not come from inside the laminate or resin system. It feeds on poor sanitation, circulation dead spots, and favourable water conditions rather than gelcoat failure.

Treatment with the pool full

- Brush the area thoroughly
- Keep chlorine in the proper range
- Use a **fibreglass-safe algaecide**
- Check for phosphates if the problem keeps returning
- Maintain good circulation and filtration

Important: some dedicated black spot treatments based on strong Tri-Chlor granules are intended for concrete, plaster or tiled pools and are **not recommended on fibreglass** because they may bleach or damage, coloured coatings and fibreglass finishes. For fibreglass pools, suppliers recommend safer algaecide-based treatments instead.

Treatment with the pool empty

If the pool is empty, the area can be inspected more closely. If the spot is purely algae, the surface can be cleaned and sanitised. But if the area is pitted, blistered, or has a permanent depression, then the algae may only be part of the problem and underlying gelcoat damage should also be repaired.

OSMOSIS IN FIBREGLASS POOLS

Cause

Osmosis happens when water penetrates weaknesses in the gelcoat or laminate and reacts beneath the surface.

What it looks like

- Raised bubbles or blisters
- Soft spots
- Darkened centres
- Small hollows where blisters collapse

Treatment

Pool full: appearance may sometimes be improved, but the underlying problem cannot usually be repaired properly underwater.

Pool empty: affected areas are opened, dried, repaired, and recoated. Extensive damage may require resurfacing or a new liner. Visible black spots in fibreglass can sometimes be treated temporarily in water, but treatment notes for fibreglass-specific products make clear that this does **not stop the osmosis**, and the spots may return within months.

COBALT STAINING

Cause

Cobalt staining is linked to deterioration in older fibreglass resin systems and can appear as the surface ages or breaks down.

What it looks like

- Dark grey or black spots
- Staining that appears under the gelcoat
- Marks that resemble algae but do not behave like algae

Treatment

Pool full: some stain treatments may reduce the appearance temporarily.

Pool empty: long-term repair usually involves removing affected material and restoring the surface properly. If the structural issue remains, the black marks are likely to return.

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE

More likely algae-induced black spot

- Brushes slightly or lightens with treatment
- Found in poor circulation areas
- Linked to sanitation problems
- Surface may feel rough, but not blistered

More likely osmosis or cobalt staining

- Spot feels sunken, pitted, or blistered
- Mark seems under the surface
- Returns after stain treatment
- Found with bubbles, hollows, or surface breakdown

POOL WATER CHEMISTRY STILL MATTERS

Poor water balance may not be the only cause, but it can make both algae and surface problems worse.

For fibreglass pools, aim for:

- **pH:** 7.2 – 7.6
- **Stable total alkalinity**
- **Correct sanitiser levels**
- Good circulation and filtration
- Avoid dumping strong chemicals in one spot

For black algae control, guidance from Australian pool chemical suppliers also emphasises consistent pH control, maintaining sanitiser, brushing, and addressing nutrient sources such as phosphates where relevant.

WILL EPOXY PAINT OR A NEW FIBREGLASS LINER HELP?

Epoxy repaint

Can improve appearance and add protection, but only if the damaged material underneath has been properly repaired first.

New fibreglass liner or resurfacing

This may provide a long-term solution when osmosis or black spotting is widespread, however still requires a stable – osmosis free surface underneath to be 100% successful.

Important:

A coating alone will not stop the problem returning if the underlying shell is still compromised. Temporary in-water stain removal in fibreglass pools may improve the visible spots, but product guidance notes that it does not stop osmosis and recurrence is common.

FINAL MESSAGE

If your fibreglass pool has **black spots with a small depression**, do not assume it is just algae.

It may be:

- algae-induced black spot
- surface breakdown
- osmosis
- cobalt staining
- or a combination of these issues

Early diagnosis can save major repair costs later.

