

Help Your Kids Swim Safely This Summer: Drowning Prevention Tips

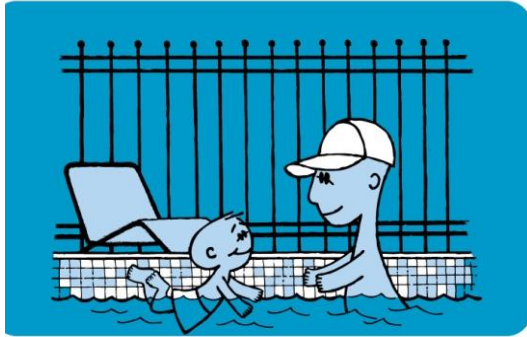


Image courtesy of CDC graphics

Keeping our children safe is a priority both inside and outside. Whether children are swimming at a home pool or in natural bodies of water, with friends or with family, water safety is always key. Two children 14 years and under die every day from drowning and it is the third leading cause of all deaths for children ages 1 to 4.

Use these parent prevention tips to ensure your child's safety in and around the water.

Learn to swim. Swimming lessons, even among toddlers and young children, can help protect them from drowning.

Learn CPR. CPR can help you save a child's life. Learn CPR and get recertified every two years.

Use the buddy system. Always swim with a buddy. Look for swimming sites that have lifeguards on duty whenever possible.

Do not use air-filled or foam toys as safety devices. Do not use toys, such as "water wings," "noodles," or inner-tubes, instead of life jackets (or personal flotation devices). While these toys are fun, they are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

Supervise your children. Supervise young children at all times around bathtubs, swimming pools, and natural bodies of water. When supervising kids near water, avoid distracting activities such as playing cards, reading books, or talking on the phone and always stay close enough to reach out and touch young children at all times.

Don't drink alcohol. Avoid alcohol before or during swimming, boating, or water skiing. Do not drink alcohol while supervising children.

If you have a pool at home:

Install four-sided fencing. Install a four-sided pool fence, at least 4 feet high, that separates the house and play area from the pool area. Use self-closing and self-latching gates that open outward with latches that are out of the reach of children.

Clear the pool deck of toys. Immediately remove floats, balls and other toys from the pool and surrounding area after use. These toys may encourage children to enter the pool area unsupervised and potentially fall into the pool.

Around natural bodies of water:

Wear life jackets. Even if they know how to swim, make sure kids wear life jackets in and around natural bodies of water. Use U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets when boating, regardless of travel distance, boat size, or boater's swimming ability.

Before swimming or boating, know the local weather conditions and forecast. Avoid swimming and or boating whenever there are strong winds and thunder or lightning.

Watch for dangerous waves and signs of rip currents (for example, water that is discolored and choppy, foamy, or filled with debris and moving away from shore). If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to shore; once free, swim diagonally away from the current toward the shore.

For more information on CDC's work in water-related injury prevention, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/> or 1-800-CDC-INFO.

To learn more about CDC's Protect the Ones You Love initiative to prevent child injuries, including drowning, please visit www.cdc.gov/safekid.