

splish splash safety

Whether you're heading to the community pool, splashing around in your own backyard, or visiting the beach or a lake, make sure safety always comes first and never let your guard down around water. So while you're getting out the family swimwear, take time with your family to review water safety tips from Safe Kids and WakeMed Children's Emergency Department Medical Director Dr. Andy Jakubowicz (also known as Dr. J).

"We can all help prevent drowning injuries and deaths," said Dr. J. "It's important for parents to know the risks and signs of drowning, raise awareness with others and always be alert around water."



<1 year olds are more likely to drown at home



1-4 year olds are more likely to drown in a pool



5-17 year olds are more likely to drown in natural water

Know the Signs of Drowning

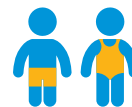
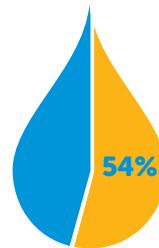
"Drowning doesn't always occur while in the water," said Dr. J. "It can be fatal, non-fatal or non-fatal with serious injuries or related illness, and the effects can last long after a child has gotten out of the water."

Seek medical attention if your child has any of the following symptoms after submersion or immersion in water.

- **Coughing** – Persistent coughing or coughing associated with increased work of breathing needs to be evaluated.
- **Increased "work of breathing"** – Rapid shallow breathing, nostril flaring, or retractions where you can see between the child's ribs or the gap above their collarbone when they breathe, means they're working harder than normal to breathe.
- **Forgetfulness, fatigue, or change in behavior.**
- **Persistent vomiting.** This can be a stress response.

Teach & Practice Swim Safety

Children need to know how to tread water and float, and they should be taught to stay completely out of the water and away from the shore unless they are with an adult who is watching them at all times.



More than half of all child drowning deaths are among children ages 0 to 4.

Swim lessons are recommended at age 4 or older by the American Academy of Pediatrics; however, it's okay for parents to enroll children age 1 or older in aquatics programs. For the most part, classes for children younger than 1 are simply a way to introduce them to water for enjoyment while giving parents an opportunity to learn about water safety.

"There is no evidence that formal swimming lessons for children under 1 will reduce drowning risks, and it's important for parents of infants and toddlers to remember that swim lessons are never a substitute for adult supervision and safety in and around water," said Dr. J.

Swim Safety Tips

- Children should always be supervised by an adult and should be taught to only swim in designated areas. If you're with a group, it can be easy to get distracted. Take turns as the designated, supervising adult and watch children closely – keeping young ones within arms reach.
- Teach children that swimming in open water is very different than swimming in a pool.
- Adults and children need to be aware of the dangers of changing weather, ocean undertow, currents and other unpredictable and uncontrollable water hazards and dangerous situations that can quickly lead to drowning.
- Always swim with a partner. From the start, teach children to never go in or near water without an adult present.
- Always wear life jackets on a boat and on a dock.

Don't Depend on Swimming Aids! – noodles, floaties or water wings might seem fun, but they can actually be dangerous and can create a false sense of confidence. They should never be used in place of a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD).

"Touch Supervision, which means having a child within one arms length, is recommended for children ages 5 and younger anytime they are in or near a bathtub, kiddie pool or any body of water," said Dr. J. "Even buckets pose a risk, and it only takes seconds for a drowning to occur."



Small children can drown in just **30 seconds** in as little as an inch of water!

Pools & Hot Tub Safety

- A swimming pool is a ton of fun for you and your kids. Make sure backyard pools have four-sided fencing that's at least 4 feet high and a self-closing, self-latching gate to prevent a child from wandering into the pool area unsupervised.
- Install a door alarm, a window alarm or both to alert you if a child wanders into the pool area unsupervised.
- Educate your children about the dangers of drain entanglement and entrapment and teach them to never play or swim near drains or suction outlets.
- Pools that pose the greatest risk of entrapment are children's public wading pools, in-ground hot tubs, or any other pools that have flat drain grates or a single main drain system.
- For new pools or hot tubs, install multiple drains. This minimizes the suction of any one drain, reducing risk of death or injury. If you do have drains, protective measures include anti-entrapment drain covers and a safety vacuum release system to automatically release suction and shut down the pump should entrapment occur. Go to www.PoolSafety.gov for a list of manufacturers of certified covers.

Almost 800 children drown in the U.S. every year.



Two thirds of these deaths occur during May–August.

Source: Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org

- Regularly check to make sure drain covers are secure and have no cracks, and replace flat drain covers with dome-shaped ones. If a pool or hot tub has a broken, loose or missing drain cover, don't use it.
- Check to make sure your pool or hot tub's drains are compliant with the Pool and Spa Safety Act.

Don't Leave Kids Alone In or Around Water

- Never leave your child unattended around water. We know it sounds strict, but there is no room for compromise on this one. Babies can drown in as little as one inch of water.
- Put the cell phone away, forget about all the other things you have to do and give young children 100 percent of your attention when they are near or around water.
- When using inflatable or portable pools, remember to empty them immediately after use. Store them upside down and out of children's reach. These types of pools can pose a drowning risk.



Be a Water Watcher! When there are several adults present and children are swimming, use the Water Watcher card strategy, which designates an adult for a certain amount of time (such as 15-minute periods) to prevent lapses in supervision.

Take the Time – Learn CPR

- Learning CPR will give you tremendous peace of mind – and the more peace of mind you have as a parent, the better.
- Have your children learn CPR. It's a skill that will serve them for a lifetime.

WATER SURVIVAL SKILLS

5 Survival Skills That Could Save Your Life in the Water



1 Step or jump into water over your head and return to the surface.



2 Float or tread water for one minute.



3 Turn around in a full circle and find an exit from the water.



4 Swim 25 yards to the exit.



5 Exit from the water. If in a pool, be able to exit without using the ladder.

PARENTS' MISCONCEPTIONS



MISCONCEPTION 1

Nearly half of parents surveyed think that if a child was drowning nearby, they would hear it.

Reality

Drowning is silent. There can be very little splashing, waving or screaming.



MISCONCEPTION 2

1 out of 3 parents have left a child alone in a pool for two or more minutes.

Reality

Drowning is quick. Once a child begins to struggle, you may have less than a minute to react.



MISCONCEPTION 3

More than half of parents surveyed think that when present, a lifeguard is the primary person responsible for their child's supervision at the pool.

Reality

Watching your child in the water is your responsibility. A lifeguard's job is to enforce rules, scan, rescue and resuscitate.



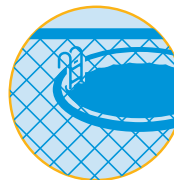
MISCONCEPTION 4

60 percent of parents surveyed would not worry as much about drowning if their child has had swim lessons.

Reality

Swim lessons are essential, but skill level varies. A review of children who drowned in a pool revealed that 47 percent of 10 – 17 year olds reportedly knew how to swim.

WATER SAFETY TIPS



- 💧 Watch your kids when they are in and around water, without distraction.
- 💧 Teach children to swim and the 5 Water Survival Skills.
- 💧 Learn CPR and basic rescue skills.
- 💧 Make sure pools have four-sided fencing at least 4 feet high.

Source: Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org