

# WATER SAFETY



## BEACHES, LAKES, RIVERS, WATERPARKS & POOLS

consumer *brief*

Summer is the time when families and their children entertain and cool themselves in the waters of pools, water parks, rivers, lakes and beaches. But water can also be dangerous especially for children, since children can drown in as little as two inches of water. **According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related deaths among children under the age of 15.**

### TIPS TO PREVENT DROWNINGS AT HOME

For children between the ages of one and four, the most common place to drown is the home or backyard. According to a national study of drowning related accidents involving children, a parent or caregiver claimed to be supervising the child in nearly nine out of ten child drowning related deaths. If you are watching children in the bath or pool **do not** talk on the phone or read. Distraction for just a few minutes can be lethal to the child.

- Always stay within an arm's reach of your child when he or she is in or near the bathtub, toilet, pools, spas or buckets.
- Never leave your child alone or in the care of older children during bath time.
- Once bath time is over drain the tub immediately.
- Empty all buckets, containers and wading pools immediately after use. Store them upside-down and out of children's reach.
- Keep toilet lids closed and use a toilet seat lock.
- Never leave your child unattended in a tub or around any other body of water, even if the child knows how to swim.

- Keep doors to bathrooms and laundry rooms closed.
- Infants in baby bath seats and rings must be watched every second.

### POOL AND SPAS

Swimming pools are the most common site for a drowning to occur among children between the ages of one and four; approximately 72 per cent of pool submersion deaths and 55 percent of pool submersion injuries occur at home.

- Put a fence that is at least four feet high around all sides of the pool or spa.
- Have a gate that closes by itself and locks.
- Keep the gate locked when no adult is there.
- Keep spas and hot tubs covered and locked when not in use.
- If a door in your home opens to your pool, put an alarm on the door and keep it locked.
- If you have a pet door that opens to the backyard, be aware that children can use it to get out.
- Put away all of the pool toys when you leave the pool.
- Have a pool expert check your pool or spa drains to make sure they have the new safety drain covers.
- Do not use a pool or spa if the drain covers are missing or broken.

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## **THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS RECOMMENDS:**

- All caregivers should learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (C.P.R.). Drowning victims who are rescued from the water need C.P.R. immediately—before the paramedics arrive. It can prevent brain damage and be the difference between life and death. Contact your local hospital or American Red Cross in order to become certified.
- Never leave a child alone in or near a pool.
- It is vital that you teach your children **never** to run around a pool, **never** push someone else into any body of water and **never** jump on another person while in the water. Children should also be taught never to swim alone.
- Keep a phone by the pool, along with rescue equipment, such as a life preserver and a shepherd's hook—a long pole with a hook at the end.
- Enroll your child in a program that teaches kids how to swim. But remember, swimming lessons do not make a child drownproof.

## **WATER PARKS**

If you go to a water park be sure to follow all instructions carefully. The Wave Pool Safety Act requires that any child less than 48 inches tall must wear a life vest in a wave pool. Find out as much as you can about the reputation of the park—such as how clean the water is and whether the park employs certified lifeguards.

## **OCEANS, LAKES AND RIVERS**

- Make sure your kids swim **only** in areas designated for swimming.

- Don't let your kids dive into natural bodies of water—only swimming pools that are at least nine feet deep. Open water can have currents, undertow and hidden hazards under the surface.
- Do not allow your children in the water without the supervision of a certified lifeguard.
- Always make your child wear a life jacket approved by the U.S. Coast Guard when riding in a boat, and wear one yourself to set a good example.
- Avoid alcohol consumption when boating or swimming.
- Get your boat inspected for free, once a year, by the Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadrons: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org).

For more information about water safety, visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's website: [www.poolsafely.gov/](http://www.poolsafely.gov/) or

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