

# Swimming / Water Safety

## Children's Water Safety tips and rules

To many, “summer” is practically synonymous with “swimming.” It’s a favorite summer/vacation activity of people of all ages.

No doubt it’s an activity which can provide countless hours of fun, whether in the wading pool on the driveway or splashing in the ocean, but it also provides substantial risks.

According to the National safety Council, nearly 3,000 people die by drowning each year and children age four and younger have the highest death rate due to drowning.

A child can drown in one inch of water. Most drowning and near-drowning incidents occur when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub. Bathtubs, buckets, toilets, and hot tubs present drowning dangers as well. Never leave a child alone near water.

Water safety for children is vital and it is a good idea to learn childrens water safety and to enroll children over the age of three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors, such as American Red Cross certified programs.

However, even children who have successfully completed lessons or who are strong swimmers should always be supervised.

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## Special dangers for pools and hot tubs

- There are hidden dangers beyond the control of even strong swimmers and adults.
- The drains of pools or hot tubs pose drowning risks caused by powerful suctioning or from clothing which can become tangled.
- These risks can be mitigated by installing anti-entrapment drain covers or safety vacuum release systems in the pump. All damaged drain covers should be replaced immediately.

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## Children's Water Safety Guidelines For Parents

- Always keep your swimming pools fenced and locked.

- Pool owners.....invest in a pool alarm.
- Always remove covers from pools before swimming. Partially covered pools are dangerous and crucial to childrens water safety.
- Never take your eyes off your child even if he/she isn't swimming.
- Make sure diving boards are securely anchored and well constructed.

The American Red Cross is a good source of information for additional safety tips, CPR courses and for locating swimming lesson information for your local area.

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## **Water Safety Rules For Children**

- Never leave a child alone near water. -This is a biggie and therefore bears repeating.
  - Even when lifeguards are on duty, supervise your own child. Lifeguards are not babysitters. Parents are responsible for their childrens water safety.
  - Teach children to swim and tread water.
  - Home pools and hot tubs should always be gated and locked or appropriately covered when not in use. Keep lifesaving equipment near by. Remember that these are "attractive nuisances."
  - Never dive into water less than nine feet deep. Never dive into unknown bodies of water.
  - Do not swim during bad weather or in hazardous water conditions.
  - If you don't know how to swim....wear a life jacket or vest around pools.
  - Always wear a life jacket or vest on a boat, even if you are a good swimmer.
  - Never run near swimming pools.
  - Stay away from wells.
  - Always follow the rules at the pool, beach, or lake.
  - Stay clear and swim away from platforms and diving boards.
  - Follow appropriate sun safety tips as well. Use sunscreen and eye protection. Drink lots of non alcohol, non caffeinated fluids to avoid dehydration. Be aware of the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Do not swim when tired.
  - Learn CPR.
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## **Special dangers of natural bodies of water**

- Water can be very powerful. Even rivers and lakes can have strong undertows. A current can cause you to drift out much farther than you intend to go.
- Don't try to swim against a current if caught in one. If you are ever caught in a current do not try to swim against the current; swim gradually out of the current, by swimming across it.

- Check the surf conditions before you enter the water. Do not swim if warning flags are posted, if water levels are unusually high, or if water conditions are hazardous.
  - Always use approved personal flotation devices (life jackets). Always jump feet first into unknown bodies of water to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.
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