

SWIMMING POOL AND SPA SAFETY



Swimming pools are a great way to beat the heat of summer. Pools and spas are source of fun and relaxation for the whole family, but they can be dangerous, especially for children. From 2005 to 2007, an average of 385 children younger than 15 drowned every year in pools or spas. More than 75% of those children were under 5 years old.

Serious injuries in pools also occur, but don't always get as much attention. From 2007 through 2009, 4,200 children younger than 15 were treated each year in hospital emergency rooms from water-related pool injuries. Almost half of those injuries were to children between the ages of 1 and 2.

This loss of life and high numbers of injuries are tragic and **preventable**. By practicing the following safety tips, we can all help keep children safe.



- **Never leave your children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.** An adult who knows CPR should actively supervise children at all times.
- Practice “touch supervision” with children younger than 5 years. This means that the adult is within an arm's length of the child at all times.
- Install a fence to separate your house from the pool. Most young children who drown in pools wander out of the house and fall into the pool. Install a fence at least 4 feet high around all 4 sides of the pool. Use gates that self-close and self-latch, with latches at a height small children can't reach. **Pool covers and pool alarms are not a substitute for fencing.**
- Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a telephone by the pool.
- Do not use inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties" as a substitute for approved life vests.
- Teach children to never run, push or jump on others around water.
- Teach children never to swim alone.
- Remove all toys from the pool after use so children aren't tempted to reach for them.
- After the children are done swimming, secure the pool so they can't get back into it.
- A power safety cover that meets the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) may add to the protection of your children but should not be used in place of the fence between your house and the pool. Even fencing around your pool and using a power safety cover will not prevent all drownings.
- Be sure the pool is free from entrapment dangers. Based on new laws, public pools and spas around the country are required to have special drain covers and many of the most commonly designed public pools also need to have secondary systems. These drain covers and systems prevent entrapment of hair, limbs, jewelry, bathing suits, bodies, and evisceration/disembowelment.
- If you use an inflatable or plastic pool, make sure you dump the water out of the pool after each use and turn the pool upside down when finished.

Be aware that teaching your child how to swim DOES NOT mean your child is safe in water. Adult supervision is necessary to keep children safe around pools and spas.

Sources:

Poolsafety.gov

Abcpoolsafety.org

<http://www.wlwt.com/health/23820189/detail.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/inez-moore-tenenbaum/385-dead-4200-injured-fro_b_587157.html