

Don't Let Your Child Be a Drowning or Near Drowning Victim



Statistics

- Drowning is the second leading cause of death from unintentional injuries for youth aged 5 to 24 and fourth leading cause of death from unintentional injuries for all ages, according to the National Safety Council's 1995 Accident Facts Report. Drowning can occur in home pools, community pools, rivers, oceans, lakes, water parks, bathtubs or even large buckets.
- Children under age 1 most frequently drown in bathtubs and buckets. Children ages 1-4 most often drown in swimming pools. Children ages 5 to 14 most often drown in open water sites and swimming pools.
- Annually, almost 40 young children, between the ages of 8 and 14 months, drown in buckets containing water or other liquids used in mopping floors and other house hold chores.
- Nearly 7% of childhood drowning occurs in bathtubs and the majority of these occur in the absence of adult supervision.
- Each year, more than 300 children ages 4 and under drown and approximately 2,300 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for near-drowning in residential swimming pools. Of those injured, 68 percent are hospitalized.

Myths & Facts

Myth: If my child takes swimming lessons I won't have to worry about drowning.

Fact: *Swimming lessons will not prevent a child from drowning. While they know how to swim, they do not realize when they are in trouble and may drown.*

Myth: The child will splash and make noise if they fall in the water.

Fact: *Drowning is a silent death; the child being top heavy just quietly sinks to the bottom of the pool or river.*

Myth: I watch my children!

Fact: *Denial...it happens to the most conscientious families, they are just momentarily distracted. It can happen in the time it takes to answer the phone.*

Fact: *Over 80% of all families who experience a childhood drowning incident will divorce!*

Fact: *Near drowning victims usually suffer severe brain damage.*



Sierra-Sacramento Regional Child Abuse Prevention Councils' Coalition

A working coalition of child abuse prevention councils from 15 counties.

www.sierrasaccoalition.org

What You Can Do

- Know CPR
- Carry a portable phone when ever or where ever you and your children swim.
- Designate a Water Watcher. It takes only a few seconds for a child to drown.
- Never allow your child to go to the river to swim in an undesignated swimming area or alone.
- Never allow small children to swim in rivers or lakes without a life jacket until you are sure there are no sudden drop off's or a swift current.

Swimming Safety Tips for Teenagers and Adults

- Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone
- Know your swimming limits and stay within them. Don't try to keep up with a stronger skilled swimmer or encourage others to keep up with you.
- Keep an eye on weaker swimmers - if they appear tired, encourage them to rest on land.
- Alcohol and swimming don't mix. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance and coordination. It affects your swimming and diving skills and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.
- Obey "No Diving" signs, which indicate the area is unsafe for headfirst entries. Enter feet first into water, rather than headfirst if you don't know the depth. In addition, learn the correct way to dive from a qualified instructor.
- Watch out for the "dangerous too's" - too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Swim in supervised areas only.
- Do not chew gum or eat while you swim; you could easily choke.
- Use common sense about swimming after eating. In general, you do not have to wait an hour after eating before you may safely swim. However, if you have had a large meal, it is wise to let digestion get started before doing strenuous activity such as swimming.



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Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies. Remember **CHECK-CALL-CARE**:

- **CHECK** the scene to ensure it's safe and **CHECK** the victim,
- **CALL** 911 or your local emergency number, and
- **CARE** for the person until help arrives.

In The Event of Drowning

- Remove the victim from the water, have someone call 911.
- Check consciousness and breathing.
- If not breathing, open the airway and attempt rescue breathing.
- If breaths do not go in, re-tilt the head and attempt rescue breathing again.
- If air still does not go in, give abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver) for children and adults to clear the airway.
- Once the airway is clear, provide rescue breathing or CPR as needed.

To learn more about water safety, contact your local American Red Cross.



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