

Water Safety 4 Families

Statistics:



Drowning ranks as the second most prominent cause of accidental death nationwide for children under 14 years of age. In Florida, Arizona, Texas and California drowning is THE leading cause of accidental death for infants & young children under the age of 4 years. Thousands of children drown every year in the United States. An even greater number are victims of near drowning & suffer from irreversible brain damage. Severe and permanent neurological damage occurs within 4-6 minutes of submersion. The majority of children who drown, or who become victims of near drowning, were under some form of supervision, and had only been out of sight for a matter of minutes. Drowning prevention information is for everyone; because only by increased awareness and effort can we reduce these very alarming statistics. Even one child drowning is one too many! The main concern of Infant Swimming Resource (a National Organization founded almost 40 years ago) is the safety and well being of children in and around water. ISR's mission statement is simple: "To prevent drowning and enrich the lives of children by teaching them to swim." We are constantly seeking ways to educate children, parents and the community about aquatic safety and drowning prevention measures. Constant supervision is the best line of defense, however supervision can break down. To ensure a child's safety, barriers of protection are crucial in drowning prevention. Arm your self with the power of knowledge and familiarize yourself with the following safe guards.

Safeguard Your Child:



Teach children how to handle themselves in the water before you encourage them to play in it. Swimming lessons that include survival skills provide an extra layer of protection.

Swimming lessons are an important step, but they do not make a child "drown-proof."

Set firm rules for all water related activities. "Tough love" may save your child's life.

Stay in touch! Keep children within arms reach when water is nearby.

Learn CPR & rescue techniques. Learn how to use rescue equipment and know where it is located.

Eliminate momentary distractions. The leading cause of distraction to constant supervision around the pool is an adult leaving to answer the phone. If you must leave, bring the children. It only takes a second for a child to slip beneath the surface. Drowning is usually quick and silent. It can occur in less than 3 minutes, with permanent brain damage occurring after 4-6 minutes.

NEVER assume someone else is watching your child. Never leave a child alone near any body of water, not even for a second!

Carry a portable phone in case of emergency, or have one installed by the pool.



Teach Safety:

Obey lifeguard warnings.

Walk! Do not run around pools or docks. Wet surfaces are slippery.

Never push anyone into the water or hold another person underwater.

Never go near the water without an adult. Wait until they are ready.

Always use the buddy system. Never swim alone!

Do not swim during bad weather and storms. Seek shelter.

Never dive into shallow water. Go in feet first. Be safe!

Always wear a lifejacket when boating, fishing, or playing in or near deep or fast moving water.

Don't cry for help unless there is an emergency.

Read all posted safety rules & warning signs. Watch for dangerous currents or marine life.

Take frequent breaks. Know your limits.

For more information on water safety and ISR Survival Swimming Lessons go to:
SwimSafeNow.com &
Infantswim.com

Leave a responsible adult in charge of safety. Do not delegate this task to an older child or sibling. This is too much responsibility. Many children have drowned with their older brother or sister in the pool.

Do not rely on floatation devices such as armbands, floatation rings, or inflatable toys. These devices could suddenly shift, invert children in the water, lose air or slip from underneath leaving the child in a very dangerous situation. Only use coast guard approved PFDs in conjunction with constant supervision.

Know which of your child's friends and neighbors have pools. Make sure that an adult, while visiting their homes will supervise your child.

Maintain constant eyes-on uninterrupted supervision & actively watch your child around any body of water, including pools, bathtubs and toilets, wading pools & spas. A child can drown in as little as one inch of water. Continuous supervision is the only sure way to prevent drowning. However, supervision can break down. If your child is missing, check the pool first...seconds count!

Safeguard Your Family:

Always wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal safety devices (PFDs) around oceans, rivers, lakes or when participating in water sports. Be role models for children by wearing PFDs, and adopting safe behaviors such as never swim alone.

When visiting water parks, note that the water depths may be different, & the rules for each attraction may vary. Ask if you are unsure of the correct procedures. Some facilities may have PFDs available if you do not own one for your child. Assure that unskilled swimmers are protected, by wearing PFDs. The PFD should fit snugly and not allow the child's chin or ears to slip through the neck opening.

Toys & swimming aids cannot protect children from drowning: air-filled water

wings, inner tubes, & floatation suits are not approved as safety devices to protect against drowning & should never be used as a substitute for a PFD.

Adults, caregivers, & teens over age 13 should learn CPR & Basic First Aid. Maintain current certifications for both. Check with your local American Heart Association or American Red Cross for classes in your area.

Take refresher courses in boating & water safety. Check with the US Coast Guard or local boating/sailing clubs for classes held in your area. Stay updated on current rules & regulations. Obey no-wake & speed zones, and be especially cautious when operating a watercraft near designated swimming areas.



Know how to use rescue equipment and where it is located.

Keep yourself hydrated & use waterproof sunscreen to protect yourself from UV rays.

Do not mix alcohol with any water-related activity. It is a deadly mix.

Familiarize yourself with new settings. Check for water depth, pool edges, emergency equipment, posted warnings and pool drains.

Check for undercurrents and look for flags that indicate riptides, or other potentially hazardous conditions, such as marine life. Beware of murky waters and sudden drop-offs. Hidden underwater objects can pose a danger to swimmers.

Do not allow your children to play near drainage ditches. Heavy rains can cause flash flooding, turning the ditches into raging rivers.

Safeguard Your Pool:

When building a pool, avoid high curved edges that are difficult to reach or tile at the top edge of the pool that can be slippery and hard to grasp.

Water levels should be two to three inches from the top to make climbing out easier.

A motor-driven pool cover can securely cover the water's surface. Position jets in the pool so that a floating object would end up in the shallow end near the steps or ladder.

Ladders, swim-outs or built-in steps should be located at each end of the pool and made of non-slip materials.

Installing multiple drains in pools or spas can reduce the level of suction for each individual drain. The location of the manual cut-off switch must be easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

Build layers of defense around your



pool. Permanent four-sided fencing, which encloses the entire pool area, should be 4-6 feet in height and equipped with self-closing, self-latching gates. The vertical bars should be no more than 4 inches apart.

Pool/door alarms, pool covers, and locks used in conjunction with isolation fencing and constant supervision can add additional layers of protection to your home pool. Install high locks and alarms on all doors and windows that lead to the pool, including utility and pet doors. Never prop the gate to a pool open.

A recessed, in-floor-cleaning system is preferred over a self-propelled system. A child can become entangled in the hose and be pulled under the water.

Keep rescue equipment, a first aid kit, a telephone (for emergency use ONLY) and emergency numbers poolside.

Inspect your pool equipment, locks, gates, and alarms on a regular basis. Immediately replace damaged, worn or malfunctioning equipment.

Do not leave furniture or other objects near the pool area that would allow children to climb over the fence. Keep



toys and other objects out of the pool that attract children.

Always cover Jacuzzis and spas with a hard cover.

Always designate a responsible adult to serve as the "lifeguard on duty." Their sole responsibility is to constantly observe children in or around the water. Increase the quality of supervision by eliminating distractions. The "watcher" should not be distracted by reading, conversations, or phone calls.