

What Is Drowning?

- ◆ The process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid.

What You Need to Know

- ◆ 2 minutes following submersion, a child loses consciousness.
- ◆ After 4 to 6 minutes, permanent brain damage results from a lack of oxygen.
- ◆ More than half of drownings among infants (under age 1) occur in bathtubs.
- ◆ Drownings typically occur when a child is left unattended or during a lapse in supervision.
- ◆ 35% of residential drownings are not at the home of the victim.

Water Hazards for Children

Because young children are quick and curious, and because they can drown in as little as 2 inches of water, these are sources of danger:

- ◆ Above- and in-ground pools
- ◆ Baby pools
- ◆ Portable pools
- ◆ Bathtubs
- ◆ Hot tubs and spas
- ◆ Buckets

Signs or Behaviors Associated With Drowning

- ◆ Head low in the water, mouth at water level
- ◆ Eyes glassy and empty, unable to focus
- ◆ Hyperventilating or gasping for air
- ◆ Trying to roll over on the back to float
- ◆ Uncontrollable movement of arms and legs, rarely out of the water

Water Safety Tips

General Swimming Guidelines:

- ◆ Never leave a child alone near water even for a few seconds to answer the phone, the doorbell, go to the bathroom, attend to another child or attend to household chores.
- ◆ Keep a constant eye on children playing in or near any body of water, wading pool, public pool, bathtub or lake. At large gatherings, designate an adult to watch children at play and while in the pool.
- ◆ Swim only in authorized areas such as swimming pools, beaches, etc.

- ◆ Always swim with a buddy. Never allow anyone to swim alone.
- ◆ Ensure everyone in the family learns to swim well. Enroll children in age-appropriate water orientation and learn-to-swim courses.

Backyard Swimming Pools:

- ◆ Fence pools on all sides with a barrier at least 5 ft. high. Move lawn chairs, tables and other potential climbing aids away from the fence.
- ◆ Gates or doors leading to the pool area should be self-closing and self-latching, opening outward with the latch placed on the pool side out of reach.
- ◆ Completely remove the pool cover before allowing children to enter.
- ◆ Drain off water that accumulates on top of the pool cover. A child can drown in as little as 2 inches of water.
- ◆ Keep rescue aids, such as poles and life preservers, on both sides of the pool.

Open Water:

- ◆ Actively supervise children in and around open bodies of water.
- ◆ Teach children that swimming in open water is not the same as swimming in a pool. They need to be aware of uneven surfaces, river currents, undertow and the impact of changing weather.
- ◆ Teach children not to dive into oceans, lakes or rivers if the depth of the water is unknown.

Boats, Rafts and other Floating Devices:

- ◆ Always insist children wear a lifejacket approved by the U.S. Coast Guard while on boats or other floating devices. The lifejacket should fit snugly and not allow the child's chin or ears to slip through the neck opening.
- ◆ Never lean over the side of a boat.
- ◆ When canoeing, plan downstream movements well in advance and watch for logs or other objects in the water.
- ◆ Take boating education courses that teach safe boating practices.

