

Drowning Facts

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death to children 14 years and younger in the United States.

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children 1-4 years of age in many states.

Each year approximately 830 children die due to a drowning incident. Non-fatal drowning affect approximately 3,600 children each year.

The financial cost to families that are affected by non-fatal drowning is huge. The average medical costs for a non-fatal drowning victim can range from \$75,000 for initial treatment to \$180,000 a year for long-term medical care. And each year these costs rise. It is not only the families that are affected, but all society.

A child can drown in as little as 20 seconds and unless rescued in less than three minutes, the chance of long-term brain injury or death is high.

Drowning is preventable and many steps can be taken to prevent drowning. However, research shows that one strategy does not work by itself. It must be a multifaceted approach.

Pool and spa environments can never be made safe. There is always a risk when adults and children are around water. We can make the environment “safer” by doing some of the following:

1. **Put “Layers” of protection in place.** This means not only is there diligent supervision, but there are also **door alarms, pool alarms, an isolation fence, self-closing self-latching gates, swim instruction, CPR instruction has been taken and so on.** Layering protection means that if one layer fails, such as supervision, then another layer is in place to help slow down the child’s access to the water.
2. **Learn how drownings happen.** Educating yourself is important and helps when selecting the appropriate layers for your pool or spa environment. Are you able to identify what an active drowning victim looks like? It is not what you see on TV or the movies.
3. **Swimming instruction/Water Safety classes.** Swimming instruction is viewed as a secondary layer of prevention. Knowing how to swim does not eliminate

all risk. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages one and older take swim lessons.

Learning to swim is a process, not an event and should be considered as an ongoing part of a child's growth and development process. Maintaining lessons on a once or twice a week basis throughout the year will make a tremendous difference in learning and retention for all age groups.

Incorporating Water Safety

The concept of **water safety** compared with learning to swim is an important consideration. While swimming ability has some safety elements inherent within the skills of swimming, there are some specific abilities that should be part of any learn to swim program. Examples are:

- Learning to orient one's body position after falling in the water and being able to return to the side of a pool or to turn over and float on the back.
 - A child should know how to safely enter and exit the water and understand the consequences of their actions when in, on or around the water.
 - They can begin to learn safety rules and proper behavior early in their aquatic journey.
4. **Water Watcher/Water Guardian.** The idea of the Water Watcher or Water Guardian tag is to help reinforce the diligence of supervising children around water. The tag is worn by a responsible adult ***whose job is to do nothing but watch the water.***

Traditionally a Water Watcher / Water Guardian tag is brightly colored and is worn around the neck or around the wrist of the "watcher/guardian".

Basic information such as rescue techniques, or simple CPR steps might be written on the back of the tag and in some cases a whistle is attached. Each designated adult that wears the tag should not be distracted by talking or playing with other children. Once their designated time is over (recommended 20-30 minutes), they pass the tag to the next "watcher/guardian", but they should still be alert, helping to watch other children around the water.

5. **CPR Instruction.** Emergency Response is considered the last line of protection against drowning. Parents, pool & spa owners and all supervising adults MUST

know how to properly respond to a drowning incident. It is vital that all parents, pool & spa owners, and supervising teens and adults be properly trained in basic first aid and Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for adults, children and infants.

This is not a skill that can be learned after an emergency has occurred. Preparing is essential.

6. **Lifejackets/Vests.** Lifejackets US Coast Guard approved lifejackets are not just for open water use. They should be available in residential pool & spa environments and used by all persons who are not adequate swimmers, especially children.

There are many things that can be done to prevent drownings. Drownings are 100 % preventable. This list is just a few of the layers of protection that can help make your pool and spa safer for your family.

For more information contact us about scheduling a Pool & Spa checklist appointment. (program not available in all areas)