

# Water Safety



## Guidelines for all Pools

- **Always use the necessary flotation devices for children.** Do not just let a child float around on a blow up pool bed or other pool toys without floaties or a life jacket.
- **Avoid running around the pool.** You could fall in the water or fall and hit your head on the ground.
- **It is a good idea to get certified in CPR.** Lifeguards have to know CPR, but for home pools YOU have to take action if something happens.
- **NEVER let a child swim without an adult** whether at home or at a public pool. Something bad could happen in a matter of seconds.
- **Even if a child is wearing a flotation device, DO NOT leave the child alone.**
- **Do not swim in bad weather.** Get out of the pool as soon as the weather begins to turn bad.
- **Do not allow horseplay** around the pool.
- **Make pool rules.** If you leave your child with a babysitter, make sure he/she knows the rules.
- **Teach kids water safety.**
- **Watch for children becoming too cold.** Water temperatures below 85°F can cause people to lose heat too quickly. If someone's lips are turning blue, he/she should be removed from the water immediately, dried, and kept in a towel or changed into dry clothes.

# Guidelines for Home Pools



- **Keep toys away from the pool when the pool is not in use.** Kids have drowned trying to retrieve toys from the pool.
- **Do not keep tricycles or other riding toys at poolside.** Children could fall in while playing with one or trip over one and fall in the pool.
- **Do not keep electrical appliances near the pool.**
- **Never dive into above-ground pools;** they are usually not deep enough. The minimum depth for diving as recommended by the American Red Cross is 9 feet.
- If you have a deep in ground pool, **only dive at the deep end of the pool,** and never allow diving through inner tubes or with other pool toys.
- **Try to avoid swimming by yourself.**
- **Prevent children from entering the pool area on their own by using a pool fence.** According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), fences should meet these standards:



- Be at least 4 feet high and have no footholds or handholds that could help a child climb it.
  - The slats should be less than 4 inches (110 millimeters) apart so a child can't get through, or if chain link, should have no opening larger than 1¼ inches (50 millimeters).
  - Gates should be self-closing and self-latching, and the latch should be out of kids' reach.
  - Be climb-resistant and should not have anything alongside it (such as lawn furniture) that can be used to climb it.
- **For above-ground pools always keep children away from steps or ladders.** When the pool is not in use, lock or remove the ladders to prevent access by children.
  - **Pools with covers are not safe;** many kids try to walk on top and get trapped underneath a pool cover.

# Guidelines for Public Pools



- **Always watch children** at a public pool. Lifeguards have to watch the entire pool, and something bad could happen to your child in a second.
- **Do not dive or allow your children to dive in shallow areas** of the pool. Use the pool's designated diving areas.
- **Let kids know that they should contact a lifeguard** or an adult if there is an emergency.

## At Lakes and Ponds



- **Don't let kids swim without adult supervision.** Lakes or ponds might be shallow near the bank, but increase in depth sharply farther out from shore. There are also strong currents that can pull a person out into the water.
- **Make sure kids wear foot protection;** even in the water, they should wear aqua socks or water shoes. Ponds and lakes may hide jagged rocks, broken glass, or trash.
- **Watch out for weeds and grass that could entangle a leg or arm.**

## At Water Parks



- **Read all posted signs** before letting your child on any rides (many rides have age, height, weight, or health requirements, and each has a different depth of water).
- **Teach your kids** to follow all rules and directions, such as walking instead of running and always going down the water slide in the right position. A Coast-Guard approved life jacket is a good idea, too.
- **Know which rides are appropriate** for your child's age and development. For example, wave pools can quickly go from calm to rough, putting even a good swimmer in over his or her head. Younger children can be intimidated by older kids' splashing and roughhousing.

## At Beaches



- **Teach kids to always swim when and where a lifeguard is on duty.** No one should swim close to piers or pilings because sudden water movements may cause swimmers to collide with them.
- **Even if there is a lifeguard, you should always supervise your child at the beach.**
- **The ocean has special dangers** like currents and tides. Check with the lifeguard when you arrive to find out about the water conditions.
- **Be careful where you swim.** Don't swim in large waves, deep water, or undertows, and never stand with your back to the water because a sudden wave can easily knock you over.
- **Prepare for the worst.** If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore or tread water and call for a lifeguard's help. Watch out for jellyfish, sharks, and stingrays.
- **Do not swim in bad weather.** Whether at the lake or at the beach, get out of the water during any bad weather.

## Prevent Waterborne Illness

*Water illnesses can happen when someone has contact with, swallows, or breathes in water that is contaminated with germs. This can happen in any body of water.*

- **Keep any child with diarrhea or a gastrointestinal illness out of the pool during the illness and for 2 weeks afterward.**
- **Use a swim diaper for babies who are not potty trained.** Take kids on bathroom breaks often and change swim diapers often (not at the poolside). It is best, though, to *avoid taking a baby that is not potty trained into the pool.* Infants can spread disease if they have a leaky diaper.
- **Wash hands** after using the bathroom or changing diapers
- **Avoid swallowing or getting water in your mouth.**
- **Keep a pool's water clean by showering before entering the pool.** Also, shower after to remove pool chemicals.
- **After swimming, dry ears well,** tilting each ear down to help water drip out of the ear canal. This can help prevent an infection called swimmer's ear.
- **After swimming wash your baby with a mild soap and shampoo to remove pool chemicals.** Dry the baby's ears carefully with a towel or cotton ball to help prevent swimmer's ear.

# What to Do in an Emergency

If you do not know CPR, find someone who does or wait for paramedics to arrive.

## Chain of Drowning Survival

A person who is drowning has the greatest chance of survival if these steps are followed:



Recognize the signs of someone in trouble and shout for help



Rescue and remove the person from the water (without putting yourself in danger)



Call emergency medical services (EMS)



Begin rescue breathing and CPR



Use an AED if available and transfer care to advanced life support



**American Red Cross**