

It Only Takes a Moment



Anyone watching children who are in, on or around water must understand that drowning happens quickly and suddenly. Any source of water is a potential drowning hazard, especially for young children and weak swimmers.

Understand the risks.

- Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14 years.
- Drowning usually happens quickly and silently—many children who drown in home pools were out of sight for less than 5 minutes and in the care of one or both parents at the time.*
- The place where drowning is likely to occur changes with age:
 - Children under 1 year most often drown in bath tubs, buckets or toilets.
 - Children ages 1 to 4 years most often drown in home pools.
 - Older children most often drown in natural water settings.*
- Know the water hazards in your community and make sure children stay away. These hazards could include—
 - Drainage ditches.
 - Garden ponds.
 - Creeks and streams.
 - Wells and cisterns.
 - Canals.

Maintain constant supervision.

- Maintain constant supervision of children whenever around water.
- Avoid distractions when supervising children around water.
- Have children or inexperienced swimmers wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket around water, but do not rely on life jackets alone—always maintain constant supervision!
- Block access to unguarded, non-designated swimming areas.
- Alcohol and water do not mix. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination; affects swimming and diving skills; and reduces the body's ability to stay warm.

Know how to respond to an aquatic emergency.

- If a child is missing, check the water first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- Know how and when to call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.
- Enroll in Red Cross water safety, first aid and CPR courses to learn what to do. Insist that babysitters, grandparents and others who care for children know these lifesaving skills.

**Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

For more information or to enroll in Swimming and Water Safety courses, contact your local Red Cross chapter.

