

ARE YOU WATER WISE?



Water safety is not just for babies; it applies to all ages. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death for people between the ages of 5 and 24 and the leading cause for children under 5 years old.

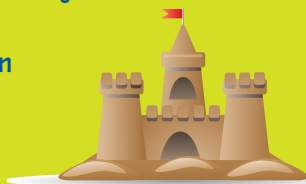


Never Swim Alone!

Always swim with a buddy even if you are an experienced swimmer. Even advanced swimmers can get a cramp or become tired, making it difficult to get out of the water. Swimming in pairs allows the swimmers to help each other.

Beach Safety

Swimming in the ocean takes additional skills and poses different challenges when compared to swimming in a pool. You should only swim in a designated area of a lifeguard-protected beach. Children and inexperienced swimmers should wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets in and around the water. Even in shallow water, water action can cause children to lose their footing. Never dive headfirst.



Home swimming pools are the most common place for a child under 5 years old to drown. Secure the pool with appropriate barriers.

The pool should be completely surrounded by a 4-foot high fence or barrier with a self-latching gate. Pool alarms are also available that will go off if anyone enters the pool.

Supervision is crucial. Stay

within arm's length of young children. When several adults are present and children are swimming, use a Water Watcher card to designate an adult as the water watcher to avoid gaps in supervision. Diving head first into shallow water can result in head injury or a broken neck. Make sure water is deep enough to dive in by going in feet first the first time. Age-appropriate water and swim classes are available to increase water safety and should be considered by all parents.

Aside from pools, there are many hidden drowning hazards at home. Five gallon buckets are a common hazard for toddlers. Empty all buckets, containers, and wade pools immediately after use and store them upside down. Keep toilet lids closed as toddlers can fall headfirst into the toilet. Drain the tub immediately after bath time, and keep the doors to bathrooms and laundry rooms closed.

**LIFE JACKETS
SIZE THEM RIGHT**

Boating

Alcohol and boating do not mix. One third of boating deaths are alcohol related. Before boating, check weather conditions to make sure they are safe, and let someone on land know your boating plan (where you are going and how long you will be gone). All people, especially children, should wear Coast Guard-approved life jackets, regardless of their swimming skills. It may take a few minutes to get used to the life jacket but it could be a lifesaver.