

# **Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Tips**

We have to be aware of the potentially hazardous properties of a swimming pool. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, an estimated 260 children under five years of age drown each year in residential swimming pools and spas. Nationally, drowning is the fourth leading cause of death to children under five. In some states such as California, Florida and Arizona, drowning is the leading cause of accidental death to children under five. For every drowning there are eleven near drowning incidents, according to government statistics; many of which result in totally disabling brain damage.

The majority of the parents involved were responsible people who thought it could never happen to their family. They were careful and had close supervision over their children. We are literally talking about people who could live next door to you.

## **Safety Tips for pool owners with children:**

- Never leave a child unsupervised near a pool.
- Instruct babysitters about potential hazards to young children in and around swimming pools and the need for constant supervision.
- The pool area should be completely fenced. Install self-closing and self-latching gates. Position latches out of reach of young children. Keep all doors and windows leading to the pool area secure to prevent small children from getting to the pool. Effective barriers and locks are necessary preventive measures, but there is no substitute for supervision.
- Do not consider young children "drown proof" because they have had swimming lessons; young children should always be carefully watched while swimming.
- Do not use flotation devices as a substitute for supervision.
- Never use a pool with its pool cover partially in place, as children may become trapped under it. Remove the cover completely.
- Place tables and chairs well away from the pool fence to prevent children from climbing into the pool area.
- Keep toys away from the pool area as a young child who is playing with the toys could accidentally fall in the water.
- Remove steps to above ground pools when not in use.
- Do not allow "Horseplay" near pool, no running, jumping, pushing, fighting etc.
- Have a telephone at poolside to avoid having to leave children unattended in or near the pool to answer a telephone elsewhere. Keep emergency numbers at the poolside telephone.
- Keep rescue equipment by the pool.
- Take a CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) course.
- Safe Baby training and basic swimming classes are available through many sources. Check your telephone directory or research classes on your computer that may be available to you.

**REMEMBER!** Parents and guardians, only you can prevent drowning. Watch your children closely at all times, make sure the doors and windows leading to the pool area are closed and locked, set your home alarm or door chime if one is available to you. Remember, young children can slip away and into the pool very quickly and quietly.

## **General Swimming Safety Tips**

- Always swim with a buddy.
- Swim only in areas that have a lifeguard.
- Stay out of the water when you are very tired, very cold, or overheated.
- Follow all swimming rules posted at the swimming area.
- Obey the lifeguard's instruction.
- If you can't see the bottom of the pool in the deep end or the water is cloudy, don't swim there.
- Avoid swimming at night in unlighted areas.
- Don't chew gum or eat while swimming, you could choke.
- Horseplay can be dangerous. Do not push, shove, or run near the water.
- Get out of the water if you see lightning or hear thunder.
- Swim a safe distance away from diving boards and slides. Never swim under them.
- Never swim near a dam or boat ramp.
- Avoid swimming in river currents.
- Use Sun Screen
- Do not drink alcohol to excess and go swimming. Alcohol and water do not mix.
- Have access to a telephone
- Learn CPR

## **Diving and Jumping Safety**

- Diving injuries can result in quadriplegia (paralysis below the neck) to divers who hit the bottom or side of a swimming pool, according to CPSC.
- Homeowners should not allow diving into a standard residential pool.
- Diving at a Public Pool should only be done where allowed and only by people who are trained to dive or under the watchful eye of a diving coach.
- Follow the pool rules regarding diving and jumping.
- Always know what lies beneath the surface of the area that you are diving or jumping into before entering the water.
- Know the depth. See the Bottom.

## **Rules for Pool Slides**

- Slides should be at the deep end of the pools so that entry into the water is at least eight feet deep. When swimming in the water, stay away from diving areas.
- Always go down feet-first in a sitting position. Going down head-first is dangerous and you could injure your head, neck, or back.
- Follow manufacturer recommendations.

### **Rules for the Beach**

- Know where the nearest lifeguard platform is located. Check to see if it is staffed by a life guard.
- Obey all of the Lifeguard's orders.
- Use Sun Screen.
- Be sure you know the surf conditions before you enter the water.
- Check for warning flags.
- Observe danger signs.
- Swim well away from piers, pilings, and diving platforms.
- Be on the lookout for dangerous marine life
- If you swim out from shore, remember you have to swim back.
- If you are caught in a current, don't try to fight it or swim against it. By gradually swimming across the current, you can make it safely back to shore.
- Do not drink alcohol to excess while at beach
- Do keep yourself hydrated by drinking plenty of water.
- Don't let anyone pressure you into a dangerous stunt.

### **Rules for Water Park Slides, Flumes and Wave Pools**

- Be sure all areas have a lifeguard.
- Follow the park's rules and lifeguard orders.
- Position yourself carefully before you start down the slide.
- Don't get pressured into a stunt.
- When in a wave pool, be sure you know how deep the water will be when the wave pool is turned on.