

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Make a splash with safe, fun swimming this summer



During hot summer months, kids love cooling off in the water. Be sure to keep them safe by following precautions from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional death among

U.S. children ages 1-9. The highest rate of drowning is in the 0-4 year age group; adolescent boys are the second largest group of drowning victims.

The AAP urges parents to never let their guard down and to take protective measures whenever children are swimming or playing near water.

While new research has found that swimming lessons may reduce the risk of drowning in children ages 1-4 years, lessons are no substitute for supervision while children are in or near the water, according to the AAP.

Following are swimming safety tips from the AAP:

- Supervision is essential for all children, regardless of whether they have had formal swimming lessons. Many children who have drowned were being supervised by adults who turned their backs for just a moment.

- Families with pools or spas should put up four-sided barrier fences that cannot be climbed and include a self-latching gate to separate the pool/spa from the house and the rest of the yard.
- Portable and inflatable pools also pose drowning risks, and these pools also should be fenced in. Children can easily climb over or fall into the pools, even when ladders are removed.
- Pool and spa drains should have special covers and vacuum systems that prevent body entrapment and hair entanglement. While public pools are required by law to install drain covers and safety systems, many home pool and spa owners are unaware of these risks and have not taken precautions to prevent injuries.

Finally, parents should use multiple layers of protection, such as supervising children, learning CPR, and installing fences, an alarm and cover, to ensure a fun yet safe time for everyone.

— Trisha Koriath