

Water Safety USA

Learn to Swim and Water Safety

Primary Safety Message: “Water Safety: It’s Learning to Swim and so much more....”

Secondary Safety Messages:

- Everyone should learn to swim
- Learn lifesaving swimming skills

Here’s Why:

- Every day, about ten people die from unintentional drowning.¹
- Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for children 1-4 years.²
- Among those 1-14, fatal drowning remains the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death behind motor vehicle crashes.³
- Drowning is the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for all ages in the United States.⁴
- Participation in **formal swim lessons** can reduce the likelihood of childhood drowning death by **88%**.⁵

More Information:

- Injuries from drowning kill more kids 1-4 years than any other cause else except birth defects.⁶
- Drowning is a silent killer—most young children who died by drowning in pools were last seen in the home, had been out of sight less than five minutes, and were in the care of one or both parents at the time.⁷
- Learning to swim means much more than learning strokes; it is learning water survival skills, water safety, and developing comfort in the water
- Water safety is about having an educated respect for the water, including an understanding of the layers of protection needed to keep ourselves and our loved ones safer when in, on, and around water.

Water Safety Tips:

Pools and Waterparks

- Swim with someone else (swim with a buddy)
- Avoid alcohol and drugs
- Avoid underwater breath-holding activities and games
- Use coast-guard approved lifejackets
- Designate a water watcher and supervise children closely
- Check with lifeguards before swimming
- Learn CPR

Water Safety Tips for Natural Bodies of Water (Lakes, Rivers and Oceans)

- Learn to Swim
- Swim near a Lifeguard
- Swim with a Buddy
- Check with the Lifeguards
- Use Sunscreen and Drink Water
- Obey Posted Signs and Flags
- Keep the Beach and Water Clean
- Learn Rip Current Safety
- Enter Water Feet First
- Wear a Life Jacket

Water Safety Tips for the Home Environment

- Empty all tubs, buckets, containers and wading pools immediately after use
- Keep toilet lids closed and use toilet seat locks
- Remove toys and cover hot tubs
- Install four-sided, four-foot fencing around pools and spas, and use self-closing, self-latching gates
- Learn CPR

Media Advisory on Proper Terminology

Drowning is not always a fatal event. Some people die as a result of drowning, while others survive with serious, life-long injuries, or none at all. Thus, the term “drowning” should not be used to imply death. According to the World Health Organization: “Drowning is the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid. Drowning outcomes are classified as death, morbidity and no morbidity. Agreed terminology is essential to describe the problem and to allow effective comparisons of drowning trends. Thus, this definition of drowning adopted by the 2002 World Congress on Drowning should be widely used.”⁸

About the Authors of this Document: Water Safety USA

Water Safety USA is a consortium of leading national governmental and nongovernmental organizations with a strong record of providing drowning prevention and water safety programs. Our mission is to empower people with resources, information, and tools to safely enjoy and benefit from our nation's aquatic environments. Our membership is as follows:

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Red Cross
Boy Scouts of America
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Park Service
National Safe Boating Council
National Swimming Pool Foundation
Safe Kids Worldwide
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
United States Lifesaving Association
USA Swimming Foundation
YMCA of the USA

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Water-Related Injuries*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/index.html>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

⁵ Ruth A. Brenner, Gitanjali Saluja Taneja, Denise L. Haynie, Ann C. Trumble, Cong Qian, Ron M. Klinger, and Mark A. Klebanoff, “Association Between Swimming Lessons and Drowning in Childhood: A Case-Control Study,” *Archive of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 2009; 163(3):203-210. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=381058&resultClick=3>

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

⁷ Present P, *Child drowning study: A report on the epidemiology of drowning in residential pools to children under age 5*. (1987) Washington, DC, US Consumer Product Safety Commission.

⁸ World Health Organization, *Violence and Injury Prevention: Drowning*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/other_injury/drowning/en/.