



Water Safety

Back when my kids were growing up, the thing to do was to get them into swim lessons as soon as possible to ensure they knew how to swim no matter where you were! My kids had lessons for a few summers just to make sure! After all, I was going to do my part for water safety. Safety first, right? Unfortunately, many parents think that water safety ends with the last lesson. Not so! Just because your children know how to swim, does not mean swim time is worry free! Your children, now matter how old or how good they become at swimming, are not drown proof! Anything can happen.

Which age group do you think is at a **higher risk** for drowning? [Five and under]; [7-9]; [11-13]; or [15-24]?

Statistically, children *under five* and adolescents *between the ages of 15 and 24* have the **highest drowning rates**.

Nationally, drowning is the fourth leading cause of death to children under five. In such states, such as California, Florida and Arizona, drowning is the leading cause of accidental death to children under five. 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. ***A child can drown in less than two minutes.*** Two minutes. That's about how long it takes to answer that ringing phone in your house as you leave the poolside. Or maybe you are trying to multi-task watching the kids in the pool and make dinner. It takes two minutes to go back into the house and check on dinner, or separate and start a load of laundry. While we are in the house, we look around thinking maybe we will just finish picking up this and that around the house, write our to-do-list for the next day, and the next thing you know 20 minutes have gone by. Those little things could mean the difference between life and death.

Then there are the Near-Drownings

If they don't drown, victims still can suffer serious injuries. The Commission estimates that another 3,000 children under age five are treated in hospital emergency rooms following submersion accidents each year result in permanent brain damage. An estimated 5,000 children ages 14 and under are hospitalized due to near-drownings each year. As many as 20 percent suffer severe, permanent neurological disability.

Water Safety Tips

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and About.com offer the following Water Safety Tips: **Keep in mind that many of these tips apply to other water sources such as rivers, lakes beaches and water parks.**

1. **Never allow your youngster to swim alone without any adult supervision.** It is quite common to develop a cramp underwater, or for accidents like hitting your head while diving for example, to occur. It is of the utmost importance that an adult be present **at all times!**
2. **Do not allow children or teens with no knowledge of swimming in or around the pool.** For good pool safety, make sure that all kids above the age of four attend a certified swimming class, or at least learn basic flotation techniques and life saving techniques in case of accidents. Children younger than four should always be accompanied by their parents in the pool.
3. **Enclose your pool with high fences, which can be locked.** Do not leave the pool open and accessible since children can fall inside. Keep your pool safe, and keep your kids away from the poolside. Remember, effective barriers and locks are necessary preventive measures, but **there is no substitute for supervision.**
4. **Avoid leaving your kids alone even with small portable pools or water bodies** like buckets, fountains, and barrels. There is always a danger of drowning occurring even in small bodies of water.
5. In case of a backyard swimming pool, **make sure that the cover of the pool is completely lifted over the pool.** Do not partially open the pool. Also, make sure that your child does not walk over the pool cover.
6. **Spas and Hot Tubs must also be avoided,** especially in the case of younger children who are susceptible to overheating.
7. For good pool safety, you can **make sure that there is always a life saving flotation device handy** near the pool. In addition, every parent should be conversant in basic CPR techniques in case of any accident. **Do not use flotation devices as a substitute for supervision.**
8. **Do not consider young children “drown proof”** just because they have had swimming lessons, young children should always be watched carefully while swimming.
9. **Place tables and chairs well away from the pool fence** to prevent children from climbing into the pool area.
10. **Keep toys away from the pool area** because a young child playing with the toys could accidentally fall in the water.
11. **Remove steps to the above ground pools when not in use.**

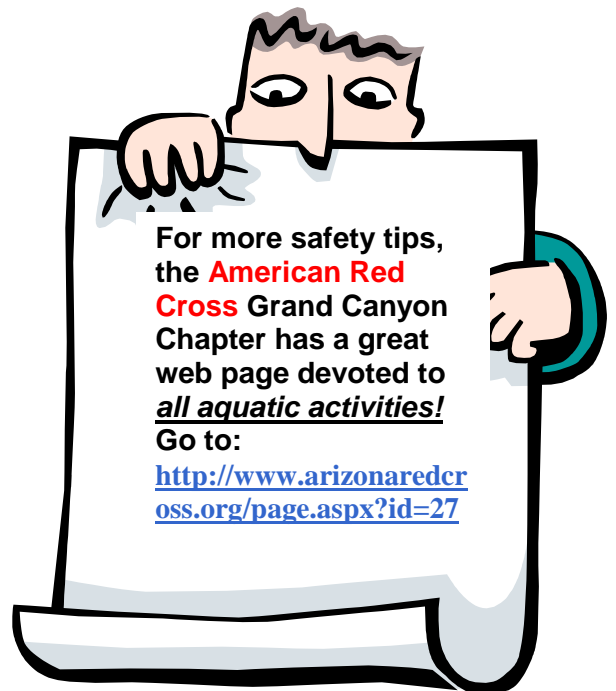


12. **Have a telephone at poolside** to avoid having to leave children unattended in or near the pool to answer a telephone elsewhere. Keep emergency numbers at the poolside telephone.
13. **Learn CPR.**
14. **Keep rescue equipment by the pool.**
15. The last, but not the least, to ensure swimming pool safety, be observant. Watch what your kids are up to, and **supervise their activities**. Do not leave them alone!



Don't forget the beloved pet!

***Canals are very dangerous
and
should never be
a place for swimming!***



For more safety tips,
the **American Red
Cross** Grand Canyon
Chapter has a great
web page devoted to
all aquatic activities!
Go to:

<http://www.arizonaredcross.org/page.aspx?id=27>

Being Safe is Smart!

Obey all signs around water!

Now that you have been refreshed on the basic rules, before you spend any time out in the sun, make sure you apply the sunscreen! I wouldn't want you to burn. (That sounds like another Preparedness Fact for the future!)

OTHER RESOURCES:

American Red Cross – Additional water safety rules for all aquatic activities

<http://www.arizonaredcross.org/page.aspx?id=27>

Pool Safety

<http://www.poolsafety.gov/>



Bobber.info

Kids Health Website:

http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/safebasics/water_safety.html

US Army Corps of Engineers National Water Safety Program:
(a child's site)

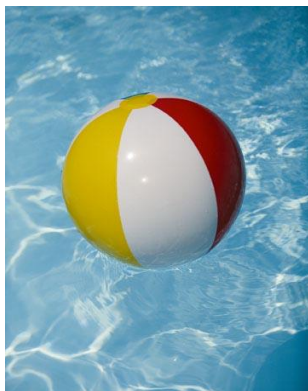
<http://www.bobber.info/>

CDC: Healthy Swimming/Recreational Water

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/>

Beach & Water Safety

<http://www.sandiego.gov/lifeguards/safety/bchsafe.shtml>



CREDITS:

About.com

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Drowning Prevention Foundation of California

American Red Cross

Water Safe Kids

Platinum Protect

Backyard City Pools

Kings River photo by David Husted