

SUMMER DROWNING PREVENTION TIPS

Drowning can happen swiftly and silently. Children can drown in as little as five centimetres (two inches) of water. In Saskatchewan, drowning is a leading cause of injury-related death for children under one year of age and from five to nine years of age. The following information will assist you in protecting children from drowning.

Constantly Supervise Children!

- At social gatherings, take turns being "designated adults" to supervise children near water.
- If your child is joining another family near the water, discuss your expectations for supervision and Personal Flotation Device (PFD) use with your child and other parents. If your child has her own PFD, send it along.
- Teach your child to wait for permission before getting into the water.
- Teach your child never to swim or play around a pool or dock without adult supervision and to swim in areas with lifeguards. Teach your child how to identify the lifeguard and other safety features. Explain that "the lifeguard is the person who helps you remember how to be safe." However, do not expect the lifeguard to supervise your child.
- Teach your children never to swim alone. Insist on the buddy system when older children are in or near the water.

In the Yard

- Keep buckets and garbage cans covered.
- Empty the wading pool when you are not supervising its use.
- A fence or barrier at least four feet high should surround the pool or hot tub.
- Gates leading to the pool area should lock, be self-closing, self-latching, and open away from the pool.
- Add a fourth side to the fence, to surround the pool not your yard. Install a power safety cover, a motor-powered barrier over the water area, and/or a pool alarm which goes off if someone inadvertently falls into the water.
- Do not leave chairs or tables near the fence surrounding the pool as they could be used by a child to climb over the fence.
- Pool areas are off limits except under direct adult supervision.

In and Near the Water

- Insist that life vests, also known as personal flotation devices (PFDs), be worn. Take your child PFD shopping so he can pick one that looks and feels good to him. Be sure it is CSA approved and is the right size. Rules for wearing PFDs are:
 - Children 0-5 years - When playing near the water (beaches and pools), on a dock, riding in a boat, or on an inner tube.
 - Children 6-11 years - On docks, riding in a boat, inner tube, knee boards, waterskiing, or around deep water.
 - Teens and Adults - While using inner tubes, knee boards, waterskiing, personal water crafts, or on boats.
- Never use inflatable water toys and water wings as substitutes for PFDs or supervision.
- Be aware that diving in headfirst can result in a head or spinal injury. If in doubt, wade, jump or lower yourself in.

- Set clear limits. Enforce and model all water safety rules, including:
 - No running on pool decks or docks.**
 - No pushing others under the water.**
 - No swimming alone.**
- Give praise when rules are obeyed. Restrict water play if the rules are broken.
- Discourage horseplay. Teach your child to walk away when friends get boisterous.
- Keep hair away from suction drain covers in spas, hot tubs, or whirlpool bathtubs.
- Never turn your back on a child in the water.

In a Boat

- Require everyone to fasten PFDs before setting foot on the dock to go boating. Having the PFD close by is not close enough. It is extremely difficult to put on a PFD once in the water, so wear it on every trip, for the whole trip.
- Always make sure the boat is in good repair and that all safety equipment is on board as required by the Boat Safety Training Manual (used for the Pleasure Craft Operating Card): buoyant heaving line (15m), paddle or anchor, fire extinguisher, watertight flashlight, flares or sound signaling equipment (bell or whistle), navigation lights, reboarding device, and lifebuoy.
- Take a boating safety course.
- Practice what to do in an emergency. With a canoe or skiff, in shallow water, show children how easily a boat can tip.
- Go to shore when changing places in small boats or canoes to avoid tipping.
- Verify weather before leaving and head to shore before weather conditions turn bad.
- Learn the basic rules of navigation. Make sure you meet the legally required proof of competency and age requirements before operating a motorboat.

Know What to do in an Emergency

- Learn child and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Keep emergency equipment such as flotation rings available by the pool, water, and in the boat. Keep a telephone by the pool and, if possible, take a cellular telephone with you on the boat. Keep clearly posted emergency numbers near pools and other swimming areas.



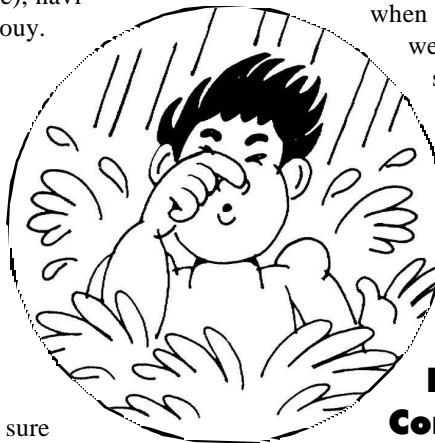
Learn to Swim

- Infant/toddler "water adjustment" classes promote water safety and enjoyment, but cannot replace supervision.
- Pick a swimming lesson program that emphasizes water safety. Make sure your children learn to swim in a certified program, and upgrade their swimming skills each year.
 - Continue the lessons until your child masters a variety of strokes, including front and back crawl, plus such water safety skills as front and back floats and treading water.
 - Teach your child how to dive and jump safely into water and to dive only in designated areas under the supervision of an adult.
- Remember that swimming lessons cannot "drown-proof" your child. In an emergency, your child can still forget how to swim or how to get to a safe spot. Continue to reinforce water safety.



Be a Role Model

- If you want your child to wear a life vest when he is a teenager, you must always wear one yourself. Otherwise, he will see it as something to outgrow.
- The same goes for alcohol. If you drink alcohol in a boat or around water, it will be hard to convince your child that it is something he is not supposed to do when he is older.



Always Remember --- Nothing Replaces Constant Supervision.

This information sheet was adapted from: Canadian Red Cross. What we have learned: 10 years of pertinent facts about drownings and other water-related injuries in Canada 1991 - 2000. Children's Hospital and Medical Centre. Good Growing Newsletter. Seattle, Washington. Children's Hospital and Medical Centre. Stay on Top of It. "Drowning Prevention Tips for Children and Adults of All Ages." Seattle, Washington. Children's Hospital and Medical Centre. Stay on Top of It. "Drowning Prevention Tips for Children Ages 0-5 Years." Seattle, Washington. Children's Hospital and Medical Centre. Stay on Top of It. "Drowning Prevention Tips for Children Ages 6-11 Years." Seattle, Washington. Children's Hospital and Medical Centre. Stay on Top of It. "Drowning Prevention Tips for Children Ages 12-18 Years." Seattle, Washington.



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