

# Stay Water Safe

Children love to be around water. Playing at the beach, the local water park or even in the bathtub can be great fun, especially on a hot summer day.

However, water can also be dangerous. Before your kids put on their swimsuits or get in the tub, there are things you need to know to keep your children safe.

## The Facts About Drowning:

- From 1991-2000, 729 children between the ages of 1-14 drowned in Canada. Numerous others were hospitalized for near drowning. One in five children who experience near drowning will suffer permanent brain damage.
- Drowning is the second-leading cause of death for Canadian children 1 to 4 years of age. Children in this age group have the highest risk of drowning because they are attracted to water, but don't understand the risks and don't have any water safety or swimming skills.
- Most drownings of children under age 5 happen when children are playing near water and get into the water without an adult being aware. One-third of these occur in the backyard pool. Older children are most likely to drown when they are swimming in a river, lake, or other open body of water. The most common location for infant drownings is the bathtub.
- Drowning, like other injury deaths, is predictable and preventable.

## How to Enjoy the Water Safely and Prevent Childhood Drowning:

- Never leave children alone around water. Children need to be supervised near water at all times. Do not depend on flotation devices as substitutes for adult supervision.
- If your child is younger than 5, stay within arm's reach at all times. Lifejackets are recommended for children playing near water who are younger than 5 and children older than 5 who do not swim well. Lifejackets do not replace constant adult supervision.
- Never leave an infant or toddler alone in the bathtub, not even for a few seconds. A baby or young child can drown in as little as 2.5 centimetres (1 inch) of water. Do not use bath seats or bath rings.
- Parents should wait until their child is at least 4 years of age before starting swimming lessons. However, water safety and recreation programs for infants and toddlers and their parents are encouraged.
- If you have a backyard swimming pool or hot tub, a four-sided fence should be installed around the pool with self-closing, self-latching gates.
- Pool owners should be familiar with CPR and First Aid practices and have a telephone and rescue equipment near the pool or hot tub.

To learn more about water safety for children, visit [www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca) or call 1-888-SAFE-TIPS (723-3847).



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