



WATER SAFETY TIPS

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5. DON'T JUMP IN THE WATER TO SAVE A FRIEND



10. LEARN CPR



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WATER SAFETY:
YMCAMETRONORTH.ORG/WATER-SAFETY





WATER SAFETY TIPS

1. NEVER SWIM ALONE



Swimming should only happen when a lifeguard is on duty. Lifeguards don't just watch the people in the pool, lake or ocean. Their job is also to watch the water and advise swimmers on any safety concerns and questionable conditions that might arise. They are also trained to respond quickly when something happens. In addition to swimming with a lifeguard nearby, a good rule of thumb is to use the buddy system while swimming. Instruct your child to always swim with a friend or sibling so they can look out for one another if their parents aren't physically in the pool with them. Besides being more fun to swim with a friend, this also ensures there is someone who can go for help if something goes wrong.

2. SUPERVISE CHILDREN WHEN THEY'RE IN THE WATER



When your children are in the water, it's time to be alert. As a rule of thumb, a parent should always be within arm's reach of a young child. This rule is true whether they're swimming in a pool, lake, ocean, or bathtub. Parents of older children should stay close and always keep eyes on them. Even ones who are strong swimmers need supervision because they're prone to trying tricks that can be dangerous in the water. Put your phones down and keep your eyes up. If other adults are present, you can take turns watching the pool, so everyone gets an equal chance to relax. Working together to protect your children is the best way to prevent an accident.

3. DON'T PLAY BREATH HOLDING GAMES



While swimming, children shouldn't hold their breath for a long time, as this can cause drowning and has several other severe risks. Make sure children understand competing to see who can hold their breath underwater, and other similar games, can be dangerous and should not be part of any water-related activities.

If a swimmer holds their breath too long or hyperventilates before going underwater — meaning they are breathing deeper or faster — they are at a higher risk of passing out underwater. Children who swim competitively should learn proper breathing techniques to avoid problems during practices or meets.

4. ALWAYS WEAR A LIFE VEST



Young children or inexperienced swimmers should always wear a Coast Guard-certified life jacket around water. There are plenty of products on the market claiming to help children stay afloat, such as water wings, floaties, pool noodles, etc., but these are not a substitute for life preservers or lifesaving devices in a genuine emergency. Use these products only when a parent or trustworthy adult is within arm's length of the child using them.

Also, remember a life jacket or other flotation device should never be an excuse to ignore other water safety guidelines. Life jackets alone are not enough when it comes to staying safe around water.

5. DON'T JUMP IN THE WATER TO SAVE A FRIEND



If a child sees their friend struggling to keep their head above water, their first instinct may be to jump in to help. However, doing so could lead to both people drowning. The Y's Safety Around Water program recommends the reach, throw, don't go technique, which involves using a long object to pull a struggling swimmer to safety. By using this technique, children can help their friend without putting themselves at risk.

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WATER SAFETY TIPS

6. ENTER THE WATER FEET FIRST



Severe injuries can occur when kids jump or dive headfirst into shallow water. Make sure your child understands the proper way to enter and exit the pool. If they're interested in jumping and diving, make sure to teach them the correct way to do it, as well as point out the areas where it is safe to do so. If your pool does not have an area designated for diving, do not allow it, no matter how deep the water.

7. STAY AWAY FROM POOL DRAINS



It is a good idea to show your child what the pool drain looks like and explain to them the importance of staying clear before they even begin playing. Children's hair, bathing suits and even limbs have become stuck in broken or faulty drains, which can lead to drowning or serious injury. Teach children to stay away from these areas in pools, especially if a drain is missing a cover or appears otherwise broken. If you notice one that seems to be operating incorrectly, report it immediately.

8. STAY WITHIN DESIGNATED SWIM AREAS



Whether you're swimming in a pool, ocean or lake, staying within the designated swim areas is vital to staying safe. Teach children about ropes and why people use them to divide a pool. Never encourage a child to swim in water deeper than their abilities will allow, and especially if you're swimming in a lake or ocean, always follow guidelines local lifeguards have established. They are familiar with the water and, in the case of lakes and oceans, know enough about how it changes from day to day to make wise and up-to-date safety recommendations.

9. AVOID USING ALCOHOL



This advice applies mainly to older children and parents. As children become teens, talking with them about alcohol becomes essential. Alcohol impairs judgment, coordination, and balance. It affects a person's ability to swim and it can even lower body temperature. Images of teens and young adults enjoying alcohol poolside are common on television and in movies, leaving your real-life teens a dangerous picture to copy, so make sure your teens understand the truth behind mixing water play with alcohol. Never consume alcohol while you're supervising your children in the water. Not only can it cause you to become distracted, but it could leave you unable to function appropriately if an emergency should happen.

10. LEARN CPR



While we hope your family will follow all these guidelines and stay safe in the water, the unfortunate truth is that accidents happen. If a drowning incident or pool-related accident occurs, bystanders are typically the first available to react and respond. As a parent supervising children, it's critical for you to be familiar with lifesaving techniques, including CPR for children and adults. Knowing how to perform CPR can be the difference between life and death. Get your CPR certification — and keep it up to date — through the American Red Cross, your local hospital or other community organizations.

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Visit ymca.org/watersafety

BE A WATER-READY FAMILY

Learn More and Register for Safety Around Water

SAFETY AROUND WATER AT THE Y

The Y wants to ensure all families are ready for a fun and safe summer. To do that, we're helping families become "Water-Ready" by developing water safety skills that help reduce the risk of drowning and build confidence and competence in and around water.

Did You Know?

- 9 in 10 parents see swimming as an essential life skill, yet 24% have low confidence in their kids' ability to stay safe around water.
- Parents and guardians have a critical role to play in teaching their kids water safety skills – but they don't have to do it alone! With more than 110 years' experience equipping people with the skills they need to stay safe in and around water, the Y is America's most trusted swim instructor. Each year, the Y teaches more than one million kids life-saving swimming and safety around water skills.

WHAT IS THE Y's SAFETY AROUND WATER PROGRAM?

Safety Around Water consists of eight lessons designed to teach kids water safety skills. A typical session includes:

- Exercises to help kids adjust to being in the water
- Instruction in two skill sets kids can use if they unexpectedly find themselves in the water: Jump, Push, Turn, Grab and Swim, Float, Swim.
- Safety topics like what to do if you see someone in the water who needs help
- Fun activities that reinforce skills

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