

SMART STEPS TO WATER SAFETY



Children can drown in the time it takes to answer a phone call. Help keep your children safe by following these important guidelines:

BE ON THE ALERT

- Constantly watch children when they are in or near water, including bathtubs, buckets, spas and wading pools.
- Empty containers and sinks immediately after use. Store fluids out of reach. Keep toilet lids down and closed with a potty latch.
- Do not rely on inflatable "water wings" or air-filled toys as safety devices.
- Swimming lessons, life jackets, and the presence of lifeguards are not substitutes for parental supervision.
- Before diving into the water, make sure you know what is on the bottom and that the depth is safe. Nine feet is the minimum recommended by the American Red Cross.
- In open water, only use designated swimming areas. Check with the lifeguard to confirm that conditions are safe before children go in the water. Watch for hazards such as jellyfish, large waves, or rip currents.

REMOVE TEMPTATION

- If you own a pool or spa, be sure it is surrounded on all four sides by a five foot fence that prevents children from getting over, under or through it. Be sure there is no direct access from the house.
- The gate to the pool or spa area needs to be self-closing and self-latching. See the Consumer Product Safety Commission's *Safety Barrier Guidelines for Home Pools* at www.cpsc.gov.
- Once you leave the water, make sure a child cannot return without your knowledge. Lock sliding glass doors, gates, even pet doors that

lead to a pool or spa. Use door alarms and power safety covers for extra protection.

- A child is more likely to go back in the water if a favorite toy is left floating in the pool. When you leave the water, take toys with you. If you use an inflatable pool, drain it when you are through.

BE PREPARED

- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, and know how to swim yourself. Check with your local Red Cross, YMCA or the National Swim School Association for classes. Many children have been saved because their parents knew CPR.
- Teach children never to go in the water unless a grown-up is watching them. Teens and adults should always swim with a buddy.
- Make sure rescue equipment is easily accessible. Keep telephone and emergency numbers with you.
- When boating, during water sports, or near open bodies of water, make sure each child wears a "U.S. Coast Guard-approved" life jacket known as a PFD. A child's "Type II PFD" keeps the child's head above water, even if he or she is unconscious.

For more information,
visit www.imsafe.com or call
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