



# STAY ON TOP OF IT

## Drowning Prevention Tips for Children and Teens

### Insist on Adult Supervision

- Drowning is the second leading cause of injury death among children.
- Adults must constantly watch children in or near water.
- Designate adults who can swim to watch children at social gatherings around water.

### Wear a Life Vest

- Drowning occurs silently, within minutes, and often when an adult is nearby.
- Here are guidelines for always wearing life vests, also known as life jackets or personal flotation devices (PFDs):
  - *Children between 0-5 years:* on beaches or docks, in boats, rafts or inner tubes, or around deep or moving water.
  - *Children 6-11 years:* on boats, rafts, inner tubes, docks or river banks, or while swimming in open water.
  - *Teens and adults:* on boats, rafts or inner tubes, or while swimming in open water.
- Have your child practice wearing a life vest in the water. This will help prevent panic and rolling onto the face.
- Be a role model for your children and be prepared for an emergency: Wear your life vest, too.
- Weather and water conditions change quickly, and mishaps can occur at any time. Wearing life vests is important, even after learning how to swim.
- **Remember, life vests only work when they are worn.**

### Learn to Swim

- Swimming is important for anyone who spends time near or on the water, and provides water safety skills.
- Make sure your children learn to swim, and upgrade their swimming skills each year.
- Swim in designated swim areas with lifeguards if possible.
- Make sure your children know how to dive and jump safely into water. Check the water for depth (at least 10 feet) or hidden objects before diving or jumping in.
- Swift, cold or deep water is dangerous. Have your child wear a life vest when swimming in lakes, rivers or salt water.

### Take a Boating Safety Class

- If you own a boat or rubber raft, take a boating safety class. Call 1-800-336-2628 for details.
- Require everyone to fasten life vests before setting foot on the dock, and wear them while boating.
- Go to shore when changing places in a tippy boat.

### Know What to Do in an Emergency

- Learn child and adult CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
- Always have a phone by a swimming pool or hot tub with the 911 emergency phone number displayed.
- Know how to use rescue equipment and keep it at the pool and on your boat.
- Practice what to do in an emergency.
- If someone calls for or needs help, respond quickly.

### Fence Pools on All Sides

- Surround pools with a fence or barrier at least four feet high.
- Gates leading to the pool or spa need to be self-closing, self-latching and open away from the pool.
- Add a fourth side to the fence, a power safety cover and/or door and gate alarms.
- Don't leave chairs or tables near the fence — they could be used by a child to climb over.

### Alcohol and Water Don't Mix

- Alcohol is one of the biggest dangers while boating, swimming or diving.
- Never use or allow alcohol during water recreation activities.
- Attach clear penalties to alcohol or drug use.

**Remember: Nothing replaces constant supervision.**

**For more information, check out our website at:**  
[www.seattlechildrens.org/dp/](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp/)

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