



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 and teens.
- Adults must constantly watch children in or near water. Young children must be within arm's reach.
- Assign adults to watch children at social events.

Wear a Life Vest

- Drowning is often silent, occurs within minutes, and often when an adult is nearby. Here are guidelines for wearing life vests (life jackets, PFDs or personal flotation devices):
- *Children between 0-5 years:* on beaches or docks, in boats, rafts or inner tubes, in or around 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.
- Be a role model and be ready for an emergency. Wear your life vest even if you know how to swim.
- Weather and water conditions change quickly. Wearing your life vest is key to being prepared.
- **Remember, life vests only work when they are worn.**

Learn to Swim

Knowing how to swim 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 areas with lifeguards if possible.
- Make sure your children know how to dive safely. Check for depth (at least nine feet) and for hidden objects.

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.
- Have everyone 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 phone number displayed.
- Know how to use rescue gear 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 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, as well as 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 activities. Never drink alcohol while supervising children.
- Attach clear consequences to alcohol or drug use.

Remember: Nothing replaces constant adult supervision.

For More Information

- Talk with your health care provider
- Visit the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network Web site: www.seattlechildrens.org/dp