

DROWNING AWARENESS

Drowning Awareness for the Summer

In the United States during 2009, there were approximately 301 million swimming visits each year by persons over the age of six.

- Thirty-six percent of children aged 7-17 years, and 15% of adults in the United States, swim at least six times per year.
- Swimming is the fourth most popular recreational activity in the United States.
- Swimming is the most popular recreational activity for children and teens (ages 7-17).

About 91 million people over the age of 16 swim in oceans, lakes, and rivers each year in the United States.



How big is the problem?

DROWNING QUICK FACTS

In the U.S. drowning takes an average of 3,500-4,000 lives per year. That is an average of 10 fatal drownings per day.

Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury related death for children ages 1-4. Drowning remains in the top 5 causes of unintentional injury related death from birth to 54 years old.

In addition to fatal drownings, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that in 2016 an additional 9,000+ victims were seen at U.S. Emergency Departments for a non-fatal submersion injury.

23% of child drownings happen during a family gathering near a pool.

Lack of barriers around water contribute to a majority of drowning deaths.

Learning to swim can reduce the risk of drowning by 88% for 1-4 year olds who take formal swim lessons.

No one is drown-proof and drowning doesn't discriminate.

Drug and alcohol use can be large contributing variables to drowning risk.

Drowning is the cause of death for most boating fatalities.

It is estimated that for every fatal drowning victim, another 5 to 10 victims receives hospital related care for non-fatal drowning injuries.

Drowning is fast and silent. It can happen in as little as 20-60 seconds. Drowning doesn't always look like we would expect



About one in five people who die from drowning are children 14 and younger. For every child who dies from drowning, another five receive emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries.

More than 50% of drowning victims treated in emergency departments (EDs) require hospitalization or transfer for further care (compared with a hospitalization rate of about 6% for all unintentional injuries). These nonfatal drowning injuries can cause severe brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities such as memory problems this issue is truly a matter of life and death for children and adults around the world. Drowning and non-fatal drowning impacts families everywhere.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC):

- 350 children under the age of five drown in pools each year nationwide.
- The majority of the deaths occur in June, July and August; most in backyard pools.
- Among unintentional injuries, drowning is the second leading cause of death to this age group after motor vehicle accidents. In some Sunbelt states such as California, Florida and Arizona, drowning is the leading cause of accidental death to children under five.
- Another 2,600 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year for near-drowning incidents. Some of these submersion accidents result in permanent brain damage.



In a comprehensive study of drowning and submersion incidents involving children under 5 years old in Arizona, California, and Florida, the CPSC found that:

- **Most were being watched by parents.** At the time of the incidents, most victims were being supervised by one or both parents. Almost half (46%) of the victims were last seen in the house; one quarter (23%) were last seen in the yard or on the porch or patio; and 31% were in or around the pool before the accident. In all, 69% of the children were not expected to be at or in the pool, yet they were found in the water.
- **Most happen in familiar surroundings.** Submersion incidents involving children usually happen in familiar surroundings. 65% of the incidents happened in a pool owned by the child's family and a third of the incidents happened in a pool owned by friends or relatives.

- **Most accidents happen quickly.** Pool submersions involving children happen quickly. A child can drown in the time it takes to answer a phone. More than 3 out of 4 of the victims (77%) had been missing from sight for 5 minutes or less.
- **Seconds count.** Survival depends on rescuing the child quickly and restarting the breathing process, even while the child is still in the water. Seconds count in preventing death or brain damage.
- **A silent killer.** Child drowning is a silent death. There's no splashing to alert anyone that the child is in trouble

The *Pool Safely* campaign, a national public education campaign run by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), provides information on the simple steps that parents, caregivers, and pool owners should take to ensure that children and adults stay safer in and around pools and spas in an effort to reduce fatal and nonfatal drownings. All parents and caregivers are reminded to follow *Pool Safely's simple steps* to keep children safer in and around the water.

Rules For Pools

- Instruct babysitters about potential pool hazards to young children and about the use of protective devices, such as door alarms and latches. Emphasize the need for constant supervision.
- Never leave a child unsupervised near a pool. During social gatherings at or near a pool, appoint a "designated watcher" to protect young children from pool accidents. Adults may take turns being the "watcher." When adults become preoccupied, children are at risk.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom and surface, as well as the pool area.
- Do not allow a young child in the pool without an adult
- Do not consider young children to be drown proof because they have had swimming lessons. Children must be watched closely while swimming.
- Do not use flotation devices as a substitute for supervision.
- Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Babysitters and other caretakers, such as grandparents and older siblings, should also know CPR.
- Keep rescue equipment by the pool. Be sure a telephone is poolside with emergency numbers posted nearby.

- Remove toys from in and around the pool when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children to the pool.
- Never prop open the gate to a pool barrier.



<https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/drowning>

<https://ndpa.org/>

<https://childrensafetyzone.com/go/drowning-impact-awareness-month-fact-sheet/>

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