

# Water Safety



## For Caregivers of Children and Youth

Spending time in and around water is a great activity for families, children and youth. However, **DROWNING** is the **SECOND** leading cause of injury-related **DEATH** for children ages 14 and under. The majority of drownings and non-fatal drownings for infants occur in bathtubs. For toddlers, the majority occur in residential swimming pools, while older children and youth are more likely to drown in lakes, rivers and oceans. Drowning can occur in as little as **TEN SECONDS** and can occur in just **INCHES** of water.

Research on water safety shows that implementing a layered approach to water safety is the best way to prevent drownings. Water safety always starts with the caregiver as the first and most important component.

## Water Safety Tips

- Constant and active supervision should be maintained when any child is in or around water.
- Children should not be permitted to play in areas where there is any body/container of water, including swimming pools, ponds, dug outs, wading pools, tubs, pails, sinks or toilets without supervision.
- Empty and turn over wading pools and other containers of water when not in use.
- Make sure you give 100% of your attention when supervising. Put cell phones, magazines and BBQ duties aside. Find another adult to take over if you need to turn away for any reason.
- Watch the face - especially the eyes. Many victims don't call, wave or signal for help because they can't keep their head or arms above water.
- Water conditions in locations such as lakes and rivers can change rapidly. Be familiar with water conditions and be satisfied the area is safe.
- Never rely on inflatable cushions, air mattresses, water toys, etc., for the support of non-swimmers.
- Caregivers should be familiar with the child/youth's swimming abilities and provide the appropriate level of supervision. For infants, 1:1 adult to child supervision should be provided. For toddlers and preschoolers arm's length/touch supervision should be provided.
- Restrict access to the pool or other bodies of water when not in use. Use multiple barriers or strategies to restrict access
- At the pool, the lake or the beach, young children and children who can't swim should wear a PFD.
- Away from home, swim in designated swimming areas, where possible.
- Provide children and youth with a water safety plan that includes water safety instructions (boundaries, depth of water, condition of the water bottom, the appropriate use of PFDS, etc.).
- Keep hot tubs covered and locked when not in use.
- Any child under the age of five should not be left alone at bath time. The caregiver should supervise the child at all times and ensure everything that is needed for bathing is gathered prior to the bath. Bath tubs should be emptied while not in use.