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WATER SAFETY

Childhood drowning and near-drowning can happen in a matter of seconds. They typically occur when a child is left unattended or during a brief lapse of supervision. Eight hundred ten children ages 14 and under drowned in 2005. An estimated 2,780 children were treated in emergency rooms after near-drowning in 2007. Severe and permanent brain damage affects as many as 20 percent of near-drowning victims.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) (12/17/08).



Safety basics

- Make sure pools and spas are enclosed on four sides with a fence at least 5 feet high with a self-closing and latching gates.
- Drains in pools and spas should have anti-entrapment drain covers.
- Learn infant and child CPR and always have a phone near the pool for emergency use.
- Children should always swim under the supervision of a grown-up. Every child over the age of three should have swimming lessons.
- Children using air-filled swimming aids should always be supervised by an adult within arm's reach.
- A U.S. Coast guard approved lifejacket should be worn for water sports such as tubing, skiing or jet skiing. Air-filled aids such as inner tubes, water wings and inflatable rafts are not substitutes for approved lifejackets

It is important for children to learn and practice water safety rules. Here are some helpful water safety rules for children:

- Children should swim only if a lifeguard or a grown-up gives you permission.
- Teach children to obey the posted rules.

Encourage children to:

- Check with the lifeguard to find out how deep the water is.
- Always swim with a buddy.
- Never jump or dive unless the lifeguard or a grown-up says it is okay to do so.
- Don't eat candy or chew gum when swimming.
- Never swim at night.
- Get out of the water right away if you hear thunder or see lightning.
- When on a boat, everyone needs a seat and his or her own U.S. Coastguard approved lifejacket.

URL: <http://www.nfpa.org/itemDetail.asp?categoryID=1779&itemID=42365&URL=Safety%20Information/For%20consumers/Unintentional%20injuries/Water%20safety>

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