

Water Safety

Swimming and playing in and around water can give your child much pleasure and good exercise. But you must take steps to prevent your child from drowning.

- Never let your child swim in any body of water or play near water without an adult watching.
- The supervising adult should know how to swim, how to perform CPR and how to get emergency help if needed.
- Teach your child these general water safety rules:
 - ✓ Never swim alone.
 - ✓ Never dive into water except when permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water and who has checked for underwater objects.
 - ✓ Always use a life jacket when on a boat, fishing, or playing in a river or stream.
- Caution your child about the risks of drowning during the winter by falling through thin ice.
- Don't let young children and children who cannot swim use inflatable toys or floats in water above the waist.
- Watch children closely when they are playing near standing water, wells, open post holes, or irrigation or drainage ditches.
- Teach your child to swim once he or she is ready, usually around 5 years of age.

Pool Safety

Most young children who drown in pools wander out of the house and fall into the pool.

If you have a swimming pool in your yard, protect children from drowning by taking the following steps:

- Never leave children alone in or near the pool, not even for a moment.
- Even if your child knows how to swim, he or she must have adult supervision.
- Install a fence to completely separate your house and play area of the yard from the pool. It should be at least 4 feet high around all four sides of the pool. Use gates that self-close and self-latch, with latches higher than your children can reach.
- Additionally, a power safety cover that meets the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) provides extra protection for your children but does not substitute for a fence between the house and pool.
- Keep rescue equipment, such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver, nearby, and have ready access to a telephone.
- Do not let your child use air-filled swimming aids, such as arm floats or tubes because they are not a substitute for approved life vests and can be dangerous.
- The supervising adult should stay within arms length of a young child.
- Remove all toys from the pool after use so children aren't tempted to reach for them.
- After children are done swimming, secure your pool so they can't get back in it.

Boating Safety

If your family enjoys boating, sailing or canoeing on lakes, rivers and streams, be sure your children wear the correct life jackets. Life preservers and jackets are required by many states and must be present on all boats traveling on bodies of water supervised by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Many children and adolescents think life jackets and life preservers are hot, bulky and ugly. This is no longer necessarily true. Newer models look better, feel better and provide increased protection. Parents should choose from the following personal flotation devices (PFDs) approved by the U.S. Coast Guard. Child PFD approvals are based on the child's weight. Check the user weight on the label.

- Type 1

- ✓ This jacket floats the best.
 - ✓ It is designed to turn most people who are unconscious in the water from the face-down position to an upright and slightly backward position. This jacket helps the person to stay in that position for a long time.
 - ✓ It is to be used in open water and oceans.
 - ✓ It is available in only 2 sizes: children less than 90 pounds and adults more than 90 pounds.
- Type 2
 - ✓ This jacket can turn a person upright and slightly backwards, but not as much as the Type 1 jacket.
 - ✓ It may not always help an unconscious person to float face up.
 - ✓ It is comfortable and comes in many sizes.
- Type 3
 - ✓ This jacket is designed for conscious users in calm, inland water.
 - ✓ It is very comfortable and comes in many styles.
 - ✓ It is often used for water sports.
 - ✓ It should be used only when it is expected that rescue can be done quickly.
- Type 4
 - ✓ A life preserver is a cushion or ring and is not worn.
 - ✓ It is designed to be used in two ways:
 - It can be grasped and held until the person is rescued.
 - It can be thrown to someone in the water until he or she is rescued.
 - ✓ It is not a toy and should only be used in a rescue situation.
 - ✓ Check the label on the life preserver to be sure it meets U.S. Coast Guard or state regulations.

Use only life jackets and preservers that are tested by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and approved by the U.S. Coast Guard. There will be a label stating so.

Life jackets and life preservers should never be substitutes for adult supervision.

Always remember these tips:

- Your children should wear life jackets at all times when on boats or near bodies of water.
- Teach your child how to put on his or her own life jacket.
- Make sure your child is comfortable wearing a life jacket and knows how to use it.
- Make sure the life jacket is the right size for your child. The jacket should not be loose. It should always be worn as instructed with all straps belted.
- Blow-up water wings, toys, rafts and air mattresses should never be used as life jackets or life preservers. They are not safe.
- Adults should wear life jackets for their own protection and to set a good example.