

Drowning occurs silently and quickly, even in less than two inches of water.

Many injuries happen in predictable, preventable ways.

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility.

Supervision is first and foremost, but drowning prevention involves "layers of protection."

Young Childhood Drowning

- Young children are curious and often fascinated with water, yet they do not understand the potential dangers of playing in or around it.
- Drowning is silent; a person who is drowning is not likely to splash, shout, or call for help.
- Drowning is the leading cause of injury death among children one to four years of age in the U.S. – two children under age 15 die every day from drowning.
- Annually in Oklahoma, approximately 10 children under age five die from drowning.
- Infant drownings most often occur in bathtubs, toilets, and buckets.
- Most toddler and preschooler drownings occur in residential swimming pools (often when swimming is not the intended activity and the child is assumed to be safe inside).

Prevention

- Supervision is critical!
 - Designate an adult with swimming skills to actively watch children in or near any water. Do not distract a "water watcher" or allow them to become distracted.
 - Never leave a child in or near water, even for a second. Drownings occur very quickly, in less time than it takes to answer the telephone or get something to eat.
 - Avoid using alcohol or drugs, or being under their influence, while supervising children; this causes poor judgment and delays in reaction time to emergencies.
 - Use "touch supervision" for young children; stay within an arm's reach of the child.
- Use "layers of protection" to prevent drownings. When children are not supposed to be in the water, supervision alone is not enough to keep them safe.
- Install pool fencing that completely surrounds the pool and is at least four feet high, with self-closing, self-latching gates.
- Install alarms on all doors and windows that provide access to a swimming pool.
- Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
- Provide children swimming lessons and water-survival skills training at an early age.
- Require wearing an approved personal floatation device (life jacket) at all times when boating or near water.
- Empty buckets and bathtubs immediately after use; consider installing toilet seat locks.

Internet Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://www.aap.org>
- Safe Kids USA: <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-guide/water-safety-guide/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/>
- U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Resource Center: <http://www.uscgboating.org>
- Consumer Product Safety Commission: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/pool.pdf>

Live Injury-Free!