

CDC Quick Tips. Strategies for drowning prevention in recreational water settings*

- Make sure an adult is constantly watching children swimming or playing in or around the water. Do not read, play cards, talk on the phone, mow the lawn, or engage in any other distracting activity while supervising children.
- Never swim alone or in unsupervised places and always swim with a buddy. Select swimming sites that have life-guards whenever possible.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming, boating, or water skiing. Avoid drinking alcohol while supervising children around water.
- Learn to swim. Enroll yourself and your children in swimming classes. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend swimming classes as a means of drowning prevention for children aged <4 years.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Because of the time it might take for paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills can make a difference in someone's life.
- Do *not* use air-filled or foam toys, such as "water wings," "noodles," or inner-tubes, in place of life jackets (personal flotation devices). These are toys and are not designed to keep swimmers safe.
- If you have a swimming pool at your home:
 - Install a four-sided, isolation pool-fence. The fence should be ≥ 4 feet high and should completely separate the pool from the house and play area of the yard. Use self-closing and self-latching gates in the fence with the latches out of children's reach. Consider additional barriers such as automatic door locks and door alarms to prevent access by small children to the yard or pool.
 - Toys should be removed from the pool immediately after use. Floats, balls, and other toys might encourage children to enter the pool on their own or to lean over the pool and potentially fall in.
- Tips for recreation in natural bodies of water:
 - Know the local weather conditions and forecast before swimming or boating. Strong winds and thunderstorms with lightning strikes are dangerous to swimmers and boaters.
 - Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets when boating, regardless of distance to be traveled, size of boat, or swimming ability of boaters.
 - Heed colored beach warning flags.
 - Watch for dangerous waves and signs of rip currents (e.g., water that is discolored and unusually choppy, foamy, or filled with debris). If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore. Once out of the current, swim toward the shore.

* Adapted from SafeUSA. Additional information is available at <http://www.safeusa.org>.