

## Drowning – Protect Your Toddler

**Drowning is the second leading cause of death for kids ages 1 – 19. Toddlers and teenage boys are at greatest risk. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has new guidelines for parents. They help prevent your child from drowning.**

You cannot “drown-proof” your child. Parents must use “layers of protection”. Follow safety rules. Use safety devices.



- Children need to learn to swim.
- Parents must watch their children when they are around water.
- Parents need to know how to perform C.P.R.
- Pools must have a four-sided fence around them.

### Swimming Lessons

New studies show that kids age 1 – 4 may be less likely to drown if they take formal swimming lessons. The AAP suggests swimming lessons based on the child’s:

- Exposure to water.
- Emotional development.
- Physical abilities.
- Health risks from pool infections and chemicals.

The AAP does not recommend formal water safety programs for children under age 1.

### Laws

A 4-foot fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate should completely surround just the pool. This cuts the risk of drowning in half.

Large, inflatable above-ground pools are portable, and they may be exempt from the fence law. Yet, they can contain thousands of gallons of water and filters that pose a danger. Their soft sides make it easy for children to lean over and fall head first into the water.

### Supervise Children When Around Water

Never, even for a moment, leave a small child alone or in the care of another young child. This includes bathtubs, pools, spas, wading pools, irrigation ditches or standing water. Empty water from buckets or containers *right away* — after each use.

Closely watch your child in and around water. Stay within one arm’s length from an infant, toddler or weak swimmer. If your children are in childcare or someone else’s home, ask about exposure to water. Know the ratio of adults to children.

### Be Aware of Pool or Spa Drains

Pool or spa drains can trap body parts and entangle hair. Special drain covers and pressure release devices help prevent accidents.

 For other water safety advice from AAP, log onto [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John’s Children’s Hospital*



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1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
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