

Drowning Prevention Tips

SUPERVISION

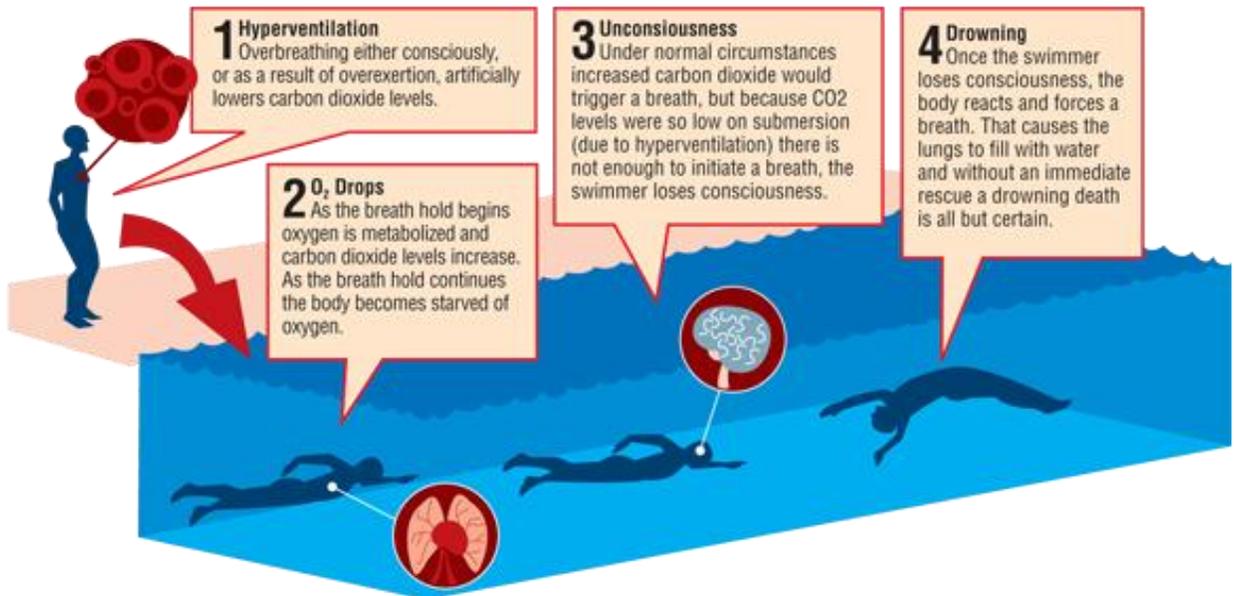
- **NEVER RELY ON FLOATING DEVICES OR SWIM LESSONS TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD. SUPERVISION IS THE KEY.**
- **NEVER** leave small children unattended around ANY body of water – no matter how shallow.



- Be aware that standing water left in buckets, wading pools, bathtubs, toilets, etc. can be dangerous to toddlers. Empty buckets or other containers immediately when not in use and store them safely away from small children. Keep bathroom doors closed or secure toilet seats with a safety latch.¹
- Actively supervise your children in and around water, and have a phone nearby to call for help in an emergency.
- Take small children with you if you should need to perform some brief task.¹
- When there are several adults present and children are swimming, designate one responsible adult as the Water Watcher to prevent gaps in supervision.¹
- Refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages if supervising children in or around water.

Shallow Water Blackout: How it Happens

Prolonged underwater breathholding can be deadly, here's what happens.



- Never allow children to test how long they can hold their breath under water.¹
 - The practice of taking a series of deep breaths prior to submerging in order to stay longer under water can be deadly.
 - It can override the body's natural signal to take a breath resulting in swimmer not realizing the need for a breath and losing consciousness under water.

ENVIRONMENT

- Swimming pools should be enclosed by a 4-sided fence that is at least 4 feet tall and separates the pool area from the house.
 - The fence gate should have a self-closing, self-latching mechanism, which is located on the side of the gate closest to the pool and out of reach of small children.
 - Four-sided isolation fencing around home pools could prevent 50 – 90 percent of childhood drowning and near-drowning.²
 - Four-sided fencing is effective in preventing fatal drowning and near-drowning injuries among children 0-5 years of age.²
- Install a door alarm and/or window alarm to alert if a child wanders into the pool area unsupervised.²
- Steps and ladders leading from the ground to the pool (above ground pools) should be secured and locked, or removed when the pool is not in use.³
- Hot tubs should be covered and locked when not in use.²

GEAR

- Reaching and/or throwing aids (rescue equipment) should be readily available around the pool.¹

- Approved personal floatation devices (PFDs) should be worn by all passengers in powered and unpowered watercraft and by anyone who is unable to swim or unsure of their swimming abilities when in or around water.¹
- **“Water Wings” are not a dependable floatation device and no substitute for adult supervision of small children in and around water.**¹
- Proper installation of anti-entrapment drain covers and back up devices make entrapment less likely.²
- Make sure children wear **properly fitting** life jackets in and around natural bodies of water, such as lakes or the ocean, even if they know how to swim.²

EDUCATION

- Learn CPR.
 - Valuable lifesaving seconds are lost by waiting for Emergency Medical Services to arrive and begin CPR.
 - Four to six minutes without oxygen can cause irreversible brain damage.¹
 - Survival depends on rescuing the child quickly and restarting the breathing process, even while the child is still in the water.³
 - Seconds count in preventing death or brain damage.
- Teach children to swim, but remember even good swimmers can drown.²
 - **Swimming lessons are no substitute for supervision of young children in and around water.**
- Teach children water safety.²
 - No one should ever swim alone.¹
 - Teach children to never go near or in water without an adult present.²
 - Teach children to tread water, float, and stay by the shore.²
- Learn how to use rescue equipment.
- **Learn the proper fit of a life jacket and how to wear it.**
 - **The life jacket should fit snugly and not allow the child’s chin or ears to slip through the neck opening.**²

1. <http://www.watersafety.org>

2. SafeKids USA: National SafeKids Campaign www.safekids.org

3. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, “How to plan for the unexpected. Preventing Child Drownings.” Washington DC., Publication No. 359, www.cpsc.gov.