



Be Wise in and Around the Water

Swimming is a great recreational sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. But it's important to know how to be safe while you're in the water. The American Red Cross offers these important swimming safety tips you should be aware of before you head out to the pool or beach:

- Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.
- Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone.
- Never leave a young child unattended near water and do not trust a child's life to another child; teach children to always ask permission to go near water.
- Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets around water, but do not rely on life jackets alone.
- Maintain constant supervision.
- Make sure everyone in your family learns to swim well. Enroll in age-appropriate Red Cross water orientation and learn-to-swim courses.
- If you have a pool, secure it with appropriate barriers. Many children who drown in home pools were out of sight for less than five minutes and in the care of one or both parents at the time.
- Avoid distractions when supervising children around water.
- If a child is missing, check the water first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- Have appropriate equipment, such as reaching or throwing equipment, a cell phone, life jackets and a first aid kit.
- Know how and when to call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.
- Protect your skin. Limit the amount of direct sunlight you receive



- between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and wear sunscreen with a protection factor of at least 15.
- Enroll in Red Cross home pool safety, water safety, first aid and CPR/AED courses to learn how to prevent and respond to emergencies.

"We all know someone who has lost a loved one to drowning or a water accident," states RoyOMartin Health Services Director Collene Van Mol. "It is a horribly sad thing, especially if it was potentially preventable. With children, it literally only takes a few seconds and they can fall or jump into a pool or natural water source to retrieve a ball or toy.

"Did you know that Louisiana has the highest rate in the nation for drowning deaths in children ages 1 - 14?" Van Mol continues. "Please take the time to review the safety tips. They could truly save a loved one's life. Share them everyone you know who has a child or grandchild who does not know how to swim. Learn what is safe, how to respond to an incident, and how to do your best to save a life. It starts with you."

Here are additional resources to teach you and your family water safety and drowning prevention:

- www.PoolSafely.gov
- www.childrensafetynetwork.org/injury-topics/drowning-prevention

Source: American Red Cross



Bypass Bug Bites, Poisonous Plants

Bug Bites: When outside, cover children with lightweight clothing and use mosquito netting over strollers and infant seats. Ticks are also a concern, so check your child's body for them at the end of each day spent outside.

When choosing bug repellents this summer, know that the most effective products contain DEET because it's proven to repel both mosquitoes and ticks. Products with a DEET concentration of less than 30 percent are safe for kids, but not for babies under 2 months old. Apply the repellent once a day and don't use combination sunscreen/bug repellent products. All-natural repellents, such as lemon eucalyptus and citronella, aren't proven to protect against ticks, nor should they be used in children younger than 3 years. It's safe to apply them on older kids.

How to Treat: Topical antihistamine preparations can help relieve the itch of mosquito bites. If you find a tick on your kid, use tweezers to pull it off by its head. Ticks have to be embedded in the skin for about 24 hours to transmit germs. If you suspect a tick has been on your child for this long, contact your pediatrician.

Poisonous Plants: To further help you sidestep these summer spoilers, here's information on recognizing these plants: Poison ivy grows as a vine or shrub in the grass or on trees. Poison oak grows only as a shrub, usually in the western United States. Poison sumac is a tall shrub or small tree found in wooded areas of eastern states.

The good news: the rashes (caused by oils from these plants) aren't contagious. Once the skin has been washed and clothing is removed, the rashes can't spread.

- Poison Ivy -- Three pointed, notched leaves per stem.
- Poison Sumac -- Six to 12 leaves grow in pairs with a single leaf topping stems.
- Poison Oak -- Looks like poison ivy, but tips of leaves are rounded.

How to Treat: If your child's skin comes in contact with one of these plants, you have a window of about 10 minutes to wash away the rash-causing oil.

Source: Parents magazine