

Safety Pool Tips For Summer

It is that time of the year, schools are getting out and the pool becomes very tempting. It is interesting to note that approximately 260 children under five years of age drown each year. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission also estimates that another 3,000 children under the age of five are treated in hospitals for water accidents each year. With these statistics drowning is rated fourth as the leading cause of death in young children.

If you are a pool owner there are tips you can utilize to help prevent accidents from happening.

- Make sure the pool is fenced in with latching gates. Check local ordinances and codes for heights and safety requirements.
- Never leave a child unattended. Never assume kids are ‘drown proof’ even if they know how to swim. Be sure there is adult supervision at all times.
- Get children to have swimming lessons early in life.
- Don’t use plastic floatation’s as life preservers.
- Keep toys away from the edge of the pool as a small child might fall in the water accidentally.
- If you have an above ground pool, remove the steps from the pool when not in use.
- Keep a phone at the poolside in case you must call for help.
- Know CPR and keep a first aid kit at the pool.
- Teach your children to jump in feet first and not dive into above ground pools.

- Tell your child never to get into a pool with a pool cover that has not been totally removed.

We have mentioned physical safety; now let's look at water safety. Small children can wear diapers that are designed for underwater use, but they are not water proof. Should fecal matter escape through the diaper then all swimmers should leave the pool till the water can be treated with more chlorine. This will help in killing bacteria that might get into the water. It is important to note that dirty diapers may contain a parasite called **cryptosporidium**. This parasite can causes severe diarrhea lasting anywhere from one to two weeks. In severe cases it can be fatal.

Here are some frequently asked questions about whether children should go swimming. (Mayo Clinic).

- If my child has a cast, can they go swimming?
With their Dr's ok and the cast is made from fiberglass with water repellant materials.
- Can my child go swimming with tubes in their ears?
Again with the Dr's approval a child can go usually with a certain type of ear plug. Some Dr's argue that pool water mixed with the wax can cause a bacterial infection, so it is important to talk this over with your Dr.
- Can kids swim if they have cuts and scrapes?
Usually, if they are clean and the wounds aren't draining or bleeding.
- Can my child swim after eating?

“It is OK to swim immediately after a light meal or snack.”
(Mayo Clinic).

- How safe is pool water if it gets into your mouth?

A child will get a few gulps while swimming and that is ok.
But if it is drunk then it could possibly make the child sick.

- Why are my child's eyes red after swimming?

The child's eyes are probably chlorine sensitive. To avoid red or puffy eyes have them wear goggles.

- How long should my child not swim if they have swimmer's ear?

This should be treated with ear drops for approximately one week or until it is no longer red. The child needs to keep the water out of the ears.

- How can I prevent swimmer's ear?

According to Mayo Clinic you might try to mix 1 part vinegar with 1 part alcohol. Use 1 teaspoon of the mixture before and after swimming in the ears. Just let it roll in and then roll out.

It is also important to note that children should not be left in hot tubs for any length of time, because they become over heated very easily. Make sure if children are in the hot tub they can touch the bottom with their heads above the water. The temperatures in a hot tub are so hot that microorganisms are usually high and if a child's head goes under the water they are exposing their inner ears and eyes to high bacteria counts. Also children with long hair should not go under the water because they can run the risk of getting their hair caught in the drain resulting in possible drowning.

Ginny Heffelmire

Also don't forget your sun screen and hats when in the sun! Protect yourself from the sun. Do what **The American Cancer Society recommends:**

Slip! Slop! Slap!

Slip on a shirt

Slop on a hat

Slap on the sunscreen

Have a good summer. As always if you have any questions or comments, eMail me at gheffelmire@dearborncounty.in.gov