



A program of the American Academy of Pediatrics



Home Water Hazards for Young Children

Each year many young children drown in swimming pools, other bodies of water, and standing water around the home such as

- Bathtubs, even with baby seats or bathtub “supporting ring” devices
- Buckets and pails, especially 5-gallon buckets and diaper pails
- Ice chests with melted ice
- Toilets
- Hot tubs, spas, and whirlpools
- Irrigation ditches, post holes, and wells
- Fish ponds, fountains

Children must be watched by an adult at all times when in or near water. Children may drown in an inch or 2 of water. Stay within an arm’s length of your child.

Other safety activities include the following:

- Empty all buckets, pails, and bathtubs completely after each use—do not leave them filled and unattended.
- Keep young children out of the bathroom unless they are closely watched. Teach others in the home to keep the bathroom door closed. Install a hook-and-eye latch or doorknob cover on the outside of the door. Always close the toilet lid, and consider using a toilet lid latch.
- Never leave a child alone in a bathtub or in the care of another child, even for a moment. A bath seat is not a safety device and is not a substitute for adult supervision.
- Use a rigid, lockable cover on a hot tub, spa, or whirlpool, or fence in all 4 sides as you would for a swimming pool.
- The hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F to avoid burns. In many cases you can adjust your water heater.
- Throw away or tightly cover water or chemical mixtures after use.
- Watch children closely when they are playing near wells, open post holes, or irrigation or drainage ditches. Fill in empty holes or have fences installed to protect your child.
- Learn CPR and know how to get emergency help.

From Your Doctor

The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.

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