



Swimming Safety

The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in all types of water is to learn to swim. Different types of water may require separate skills for swimmers. By understanding different water environments, from oceans to lakes to pools, you can help to keep yourself and your family safe. Take care in all types of water to prevent swimming accidents this summer. s

Ocean Swimming

- * Stay within the designated swimming area, ideally within the visibility of a lifeguard. Never swim alone.
- * Check the surf conditions before you enter the water. Check to see if a warning flag is up or check with a lifeguard for water conditions, beach conditions, or any potential hazards.
- * Don't try to swim against a current if caught in one. Swim gradually out of the current by swimming across it.
- * Make sure you always have enough energy to swim back to shore.
- * Stay away from piers, pilings, and diving platforms when in the water.
- * Keep a lookout for aquatic life. Water plants and animals may be dangerous. Avoid patches of plants and leave animals alone.

Lake and River Swimming

- * Select a supervised area with a trained lifeguard. Even good swimmers can have an unexpected medical emergency.
- * Select an area that is clean and well-maintained. A clean bathhouse, clean restrooms, and a litter-free environment show the management's concern for your health and safety.
- * Select an area that has good water quality and safe natural conditions. Murky water, hidden underwater objects, unexpected drop-offs, and aquatic plant life are hazards. Water pollution can cause health problems for swimmers. Strong tides, big waves, and currents can turn an event that began as fun into a tragedy.
- * Make sure the water is deep enough before entering head-first. Too many swimmers are seriously injured every year by entering head-first into water that is too shallow. A feet-first entry is much safer than diving.
- * Be sure docks are in good condition. Never swim under them. Look before jumping off to be sure no one is in the way.
- * Avoid drainage ditches. After heavy rains, they can quickly change into raging rivers that can easily take a human life; even the strongest swimmers are no match for the power of the water. Fast water and debris in the current make ditches very dangerous.

Pool swimming

- * Enclose the pool completely with a self-locking, self-closing fence with vertical bars. Openings in the fence should be no more than four inches wide. The house should not be included as a part of the barrier.
- * Never leave furniture near the fence that would enable a child to climb over the fence.
- * Post CPR instructions and 9-1-1 or your local emergency number in the pool area.
- * Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. Poles, rope, and personal flotation devices (PFDs) are recommended. The use of flotation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision.
- * Keep toys, which can attract young children, away from the pool when it is not in use.
- * Pool covers should always be completely removed prior to pool use.

Swimming Safety for Children

- * Never leave a child unobserved around water. Watch children around any water environment (pool, stream, lake, tub, toilet, bucket of water), no matter what skills your child has acquired and no matter how shallow the water.
- * Keep your cell phone with you. If you don't have one, install a phone by the pool or keep a cordless phone nearby so that you can call 9-1-1 in an emergency. At a swimming facility, locate the nearest pay phone and keep change with you.
- * Learn American Red Cross Infant/Child CPR and insist that others who care for your child know CPR.
- * If a child is missing, check the pool first.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and counsels victims of disasters; provides nearly half of the nation's blood supply; teaches lifesaving skills; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its humanitarian mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org.