

Pool Safety Tips

BY NATALIE LERNER



It had been a long day of fun in the sun. We had already played sharks and minnows, showed off our best cannon ball splash, seen who could hold their breath the longest under water, and Marco had found Polo. The adults were out of the pool enjoying a cold beverage at that point, and we kids were still in the pool doing continuous races back and forth to the deep end.

I had been pushing hard for over thirty minutes to beat my brother each round. This particular time, I came up for air winded and physically spent, in desperation to get to the exit step or to an edge quickly. About eight feet from the edge my brother tried to push past me. In my weakened state, he actually had pushed me under. I grabbed on to him to help pull me up. However, with him just as exhausted, we began to pull each other under. The situation intensified very quickly, and all I can remember next is my father, the trained life guard and competitive diver that he was, diving in like a scene out of Baywatch to come and rescue us.

Out of all of the stories I could've shared with you, this one is the lightest. There are other stories in my memory bank where the outcome was not as pleasant.

I still absolutely enjoy being in the water though. Because of my experiences, safety is simply always at the forefront of my mind.

As summer parties continue to rise with Fourth of July just days away, from one neighbor to another, I simply want to remind you to stay alert. Keep your eyes peeled and your ears listening.

According to the American Red Cross, 69% of young children who drown were not expected to be in or near water. To reduce risks, here are some important things the American Red Cross urges us to remember and to take into consideration:

1. Secure your pool with appropriate four-sided isolation fencing with a self-closing and self-latching gate that is out of the reach of a child. For above ground pools, remove steps and lock securely when the pool is not in use. Secondary barriers at doors and windows are an extra safeguard.
2. Work on having all members of the family learn to swim. Practice safe poolside and swimming behaviors:
 - Do not enter head first unless in a pool that has a safe diving area.

- Stay away from drains and other openings that cause suction.
 - Swim with a buddy.
 - Only swim when supervised by a water watcher...and stay in arm's reach of young children.
 - Swim sober.
 - Supervise others sober and without distractions, such as reading or talking on or using a cell phone.
3. Install anti-entrapment drain covers and safety release systems to protect against drain entrapment.
 4. If a child is missing, check the water first.
 5. Know what to do in an emergency—call for help and learn CPR.

For further preparation, the American Red Cross has a detailed app to help all members of the family learn water safety in a fun and engaging way. You can text "SWIM" to 90999 to get access to downloading that app.

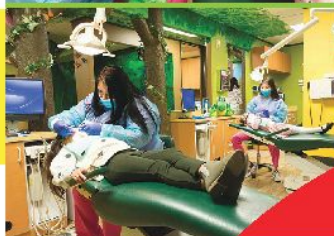
Pool time is fun time. Just keep safety in mind—it'll save your behind!



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