

## Swimming Safety

Swimming is a life skill that everyone should have. But there is more to it than just knowing basic swimming skills. It's about being water competent. The American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program, taught by Water Safety Instructor® certified professionals (WSI™), helps equip people of all ages with knowledge and skills to become water competent, which includes being water smart – knowing how to prevent and respond to water emergencies.

Here are some swimming safety tips whether you are just starting to learn to be water competent or improving your skills and endurance:

Provide close and constant attention to children you are supervising in or near water.

Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards. Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone.

Provide close and constant attention to children you are supervising, even when a lifeguard is present, no matter how well the child can swim or how shallow the water. Avoid distractions including cell phones.

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.

Designate a "water watcher" whenever in a group setting.

Take smart precautions and use layers of protection.

Stay within an arm's reach of any weak or inexperienced swimmer who is in the 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.

Do not rely on the use of water wings, swim rings, inflatable toys or other items designed for water recreation to replace adult supervision.

If you have a pool, secure it with appropriate barriers to prevent unsupervised access to the water.

Many children who drown in home pools did so during non-swim times – when they weren't expected to be in the water, including as the swimming activity was coming to an end and everyone was thought to be out of the water.

Children were often out of sight for less than 5 minutes and in the care of one or both parents at the time.

Ensure that everyone in the family learns to swim well and what to do in a water emergency.

If a child is missing, check the water first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.

Know how and when to call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.

Have appropriate equipment, such as reaching or throwing equipment, a cell phone, life jackets and a first aid kit.

Enroll in age-appropriate Red Cross water orientation and learn-to-swim courses.

Enroll in Red Cross home pool safety, water safety, first aid and CPR/AED courses to learn how to prevent and respond to emergencies.

### Four components for swim safety

1

#### ATTENTION

Adults staying aware, and attentive while children are swimming

2

#### PROXIMITY

Adults being close enough to the body of water that action can be taken in the case of an emergency.

3

#### CONTINUITY

Adults maintaining constant supervision, not being distracted by cell phones or surroundings.

4

#### COMPETENCY

Having adults present that know how to perform CPR and swim, especially when lifeguards are not present.

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