

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



Pinellas County Health Department

Steps to a HealthierFL—Pinellas County

Water Safety

Prevent a Tragedy

Most drownings occur in backyard pools; however, young children can drown in less than two inches of water.

Why Is It Important to Be Safe in the Water?

Fish are able to live and breathe under water, but people need air to breathe. People drown when too much water gets into their lungs. When that happens, the lungs can't carry enough oxygen to the brain and the rest of the body.

Drowning is the second most common cause of death from injuries among kids under the age of 14. Drowning can happen so fast. A person can drown in less than two minutes after their head goes under the water. That leaves very little time for someone to help.

Many drownings and near drownings occur when a kid accidentally falls into a swimming pool, but accidents can happen anywhere. That is why everyone needs to know how to be safe around water.



Tips for Drowning Prevention

Limit Access to Water

- Fences must be a minimum of four feet tall and surround the water on all four sides.
- Use self-latching locks. Locate them above a child's reach.
- Fences are a back-up, not a substitute to watching children around water.



Supervision

- Never leave a child alone near the water, not even for one second.
- Never assume someone else is watching your child at any time.
- Never rely on flotation devices or swimming lessons to protect a child.

Multiple Barriers

- A fence only works if it is put up and used every day in the right way.
- All doors and windows from the house to the pool should be protected with an alarm at all times.





Keep Your Eyes on the Kids



Adult supervision is the most effective prevention strategy.

Why Kids are at Risk

Most drownings and near-drownings occur in backyard swimming pools. More than half of these drownings take place in the child's home pool and one-third at the homes of friends, neighbors or relatives.

It is important to know that children, especially younger ones, can drown in as little as one inch of water. This puts them at risk of drowning in wading pools, bathtubs, buckets, diaper pails, toilets, spas and hot tubs.

Childhood drownings and near-drownings can happen in a matter of seconds. Drownings typically occur when a child is left unattended for a very short time.



Other Risk Factors

- The majority of children who drown in swimming pools were last seen in the home, had been out of sight for less than five minutes and were in the care of one or both parents when they drowned.
- In-ground swimming pools that do not have complete four-sided fencing are 60 percent more likely to be involved in drownings than those that do have four-sided fencing.
- Drownings and near-drownings tend to happen on weekends and between the months of May and August.
- Older children are more likely to drown in open water, such as lakes, rivers and oceans.
- Florida loses more young children to drowning than any other state in the nation.

www.pinellashealth.com



For information about Steps to a Healthier FL-Pinellas County visit our website: www.StepsFL.com or call (727) 820-4113

Drowning is a quick and silent killer

In the time it takes to ...

...cross the room for a towel (10 seconds), a child in the bathtub can become submerged.

...answer the phone (2 minutes), that child can lose consciousness.

...sign for a package at your front door (4 to 6 minutes), a child submerged in the bathtub or pool can sustain permanent brain damage.

Water Watcher Pledge

To help protect children from drowning. I will.....

- ☀ Constantly watch the children who are in or near water and keep them within reach.
- ☀ Give the supervision responsibility to another adult who agrees to actively watch the children if I need to leave for any reason.
- ☀ Make sure rescue equipment is easily accessible. Keep a telephone and emergency numbers with me.
- ☀ Latch gates, lock doors, use alarms and create two or more barriers to the pool, spa or any water.
- ☀ Once I leave the water, I will make sure a child cannot return without my knowledge.

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