



Swimming Pool Safety

Statistics show half of the children under the age of five that drown, do so in private swimming pools or spas. The children at greatest risk are toddlers, aged 1 – 3, and for them, drowning is the single most common cause of death.

For every drowning there are also about 3 children admitted to hospital after immersion (near drowning accidents) with some of these children suffering some form of brain damage.

Simple measures would prevent these deaths and near drownings.

Basic Safety and Backyard Pools

To reduce drownings, and near drownings occurring to young children, Kidsafe is emphasising three aspects of pool safety:

1. **Take Precautions.** The most important precaution is a **safety fence completely isolating the pool**. The fence should conform to the Australian Standard (AS 1926), have a self closing and self latching gate, be well maintained, and have no objects nearby a child could use to climb over it, including a BBQ, tables, chairs, pot plants, trees and shrubs.
2. **Always Watch Children Near Water.** Children, particularly toddlers, are attracted to water. They have no fear and little ability to look after themselves in the water and can therefore drown quickly and silently. Therefore children need constant attention when they are near water.

3. **Do not leave children in the pool unsupervised.** If you have to leave the pool area for any reason and there is no other adult to supervise the children, take the children with you and ensure the pool gate has closed and latched. Educate children that there must be an adult with them before they may go into the pool area. Older children under the age of 16 should not be expected to be responsible for supervising younger children, especially those under 5 in and around pool areas.



Know What To Do In An Emergency

The first few minutes are vital and may make a difference between life and death. Therefore, it is important that those with backyard pools know basic resuscitation techniques and how to deal with an emergency.

Keep a resuscitation chart clearly displayed in the pool area.

Familiarise toddlers and young children with water and have them taught to swim. However, do not regard this as a replacement for appropriate fencing and supervision.

While the major danger is to young children, older children are NOT automatically safe.

**KEEP WATCH
AND SUPERVISE
WHENEVER CHILDREN ARE
IN OR AROUND THE POOL**

child safety is no accident



fact sheet



Appropriate Fencing

State and Territory and Local Governments often have requirements for fencing pools.

Householders should check with these authorities about requirements in their area. As a minimum safe standard, Kidsafe recommends that fencing should:

- Completely isolate the pool from other areas.
- Conform to Australian Standard 1926:1.2m high
- Self closing/self latching child resistant gate
- Resistant to climbing
- Vertical members no more than 100mm apart
- Horizontal members at least 900mm apart
- Do not obscure a view of the pool.

Gates should be maintained to ensure they close properly. Gates should not be propped open. Nothing should be near the fence that a child could use or move to climb the fence or gate.

Only allow your child near a pool if you are able to stay and supervise.

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Water Safety

The only safe way to protect your child is to have isolation fencing around a pool or spa with a self latching and self closing gate.

Always watch you child in and around water.

Learn what to do in an emergency: basic first aid and resuscitation.

Cover garden ponds with wire mesh that is strong enough to hold the weight of a young child and high enough above the surface of the water to keep their faces out of the water. Empty out water from containers such as buckets and wading pools when not in use. A child can drown silently in as little as 5cm of water.

Other Precautions

Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary Resuscitation)

The first few minutes in an emergency are vital and can make a difference between life and death.

Courses in basic resuscitation techniques are available in New South Wales from:

Royal Life Saving Society- royallifesaving.com.au

Australian Red Cross- redcross.org.au

St John Ambulance- stjohn.org.au

In An Emergency

Have responsible person phone the Ambulance Service on the 000 number while you start providing resuscitation to the child.

If by yourself, take the child to the phone, phone the Ambulance Service on 000. The trained operator will give emergency instructions over the phone.

The Royal Life Saving Society Australia have developed a *Home Pool Safety Checklist* which is available to download at:

royallifesaving.com.au

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