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**Pool Safety Includes Kids Knowing How to Swim**

**By Gregory Fort**

As we go through life it is amazing how many people you meet that never learned how to swim. If

these parents ever accompany their children to swimming pools or lakes, they do not have the skills to save their own child. Teaching children to swim should be mandatory, and is, if you own a pool.

Studies have shown that children who started swimming lessons at ages 2–4 actually learned to swim well at an average age of 5–1/2 years. Should you wait until kindergarten age to start swimming lessons? Absolutely not. While younger children may not swim well, they can be taught how to get to the edge of the pool. These precious seconds may well save their life.

Survival swimming is now being taught to children as young as six months. One statistic shows that 86% of children that drown do so while fully clothed. Survival swimming is taught to children who are fully clothed. <http://www.infantsswim.com> Infant Swimming Resource is a website dedicated to reducing the number of accidental drownings. The author does not have any ties to the company or website, but would encourage the reader to visit this fine resource.

If we haven't scared you enough about child drownings, think about this:

Among children ages 1 to 4 years, most drownings occur in residential swimming pools (Brenner et al. 2001). Most young children who drowned in pools were last seen in the home, had been out of sight less than five minutes, and were in the care of one or both parents at the time (Present 1987). For every child who drowns, three receive emergency department care for non-fatal submersion injuries. More than 40% of these children require hospitalization (CDC 2003). Nonfatal incidents can cause brain damage that result in long-term disabilities ranging from memory problems and learning disabilities to the permanent loss of basic functioning (i.e. permanent vegetative state). Do figures like these shake you up; make you sick to your stomach thinking "what if" about your own children? Then do something about it. Find out about infant swim programs. Find out about learn to swim programs for older children. And if you never learned how to swim, join a program yourself.

Learning how to swim is not the only requirement for swimming pool safety, just a very important one. Proper supervision and having fencing installed around the pool are also needed. Having a phone with

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you so you don't have to leave the pool is another good idea. Other safety considerations can be found at the article resource page of [http://www.pool-pockets.com/Published\\_Articles.html](http://www.pool-pockets.com/Published_Articles.html) Pool-Pockets

### Cited Resources:

Children: In 2001, 859 children ages 0 to 14 years died from drowning (CDC 2003). While drowning rates have slowly declined (Branche 1999), drowning remains the second-leading cause of injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14 years (CDC 2003).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Online]. (2003). National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (producer). [cited 2003 Dec 31]. Available from URL: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars).

Branche CM. What is happening with drowning rates in the United States? In: Fletemeyer JR and Freas SJ, editors. Drowning: New perspectives on intervention and prevention. Florida: CRC Press LLC; 1999.

Gregory Fort is a partner with Pool-Pockets – Your Pool Toy Storage Solution

## Summer Safety Tips For Children

### By Nicole Dean

Summer is a fun time, but it's also a time when a lot of accidents happen. Here are some ways to keep your children safe this summer.

Water safety. If you have a pool or plan to be around the water at all, then make sure you've got all security devices in place. All gates must be locked, and alarms installed, especially if you have non-swimming children at home.

Some general simple rules for children around any body of water are:

1. No running or horseplay near the pool.
2. Kids only swim with an adult watching them.
3. Make sure your children are taking swim lessons that teach, not only the basic strokes, but also survival strokes and basic water safety as well. All American Red Cross certified programs incorporate water safety into their swim lessons.
4. Of course, if lightening is possible, leave the water until the weather risk passes.
5. If your children are swimming in the ocean, follow the flag warnings and be cautious of the tides.

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Sun safety. No matter how old we are or how careful we are, that sun will surprise us and we'll suffer a burn.

Some simple rules to keep your children safe in the sun are:

1. Always apply sun screen - even if it's a cloudy day.
2. Have your kids wear a t-shirt and hat if they have fair skin.
3. Make sure you have water proof sunblock on your kids if they're in the water.
4. Apply sunscreen often, especially if your kids have fair skin or are playing in water.
5. Provide your children with plenty of water, juice, or popsicles. Keep them hydrated to help prevent heat stroke.

Bicycle safety.

Some simple rules to keep your children safe on their bikes are:

1. A helmet is a must. Ask any nurse in any Emergency Room and you'll find out why.
2. If you've got a child who daydreams, wear a whistle around your neck when you go on a bike ride

together. If you see him or her being unsafe, you can blow the whistle. This is much more effective than trying to yell.

3. Look for bike paths in the woods. These allow your child to ride freely without the hazards of traffic. Pack a picnic lunch and make a day of it.

So many life-changing accidents are preventable. Make it a safe -- and a fun summer!

Nicole Dean invites you to

<http://www.ShowKidstheFun.com>

-- a free website filled with activities to

make memories with your children and

<http://www.ShowMomtheMoney.com>

-- a fun and informative

resource for moms who want to make money from home.



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