



WATER SAFETY IN AND AROUND THE HOME

Q. What areas around the home can present a drowning danger?

- A. The backyard pool and spa are obvious areas in which drowning can and have occurred, however, there are also many other aquatic areas around the home which present a threat to young children such as buckets and other vessels that can contain water. Parents must be mindful of always emptying the bath, the nappy bucket, putting the pets water bowls out of reach.

Q. Where have drowning deaths around the home occurred in the past?

- A. Drowning deaths have occurred in the following places:
- Buckets
 - Swimming pools
 - Spas
 - Post holes
 - Eskies
 - Bathtubs
 - Fish ponds
 - Washing machines

Q. When do drowning deaths around the home occur?

- A. Studies show the majority of toddler drowning deaths peak between 4:30pm – 5:30pm on weeknights when parents' attention may be divided with the arrival home of other siblings, preparing of evening meal, etc. Be aware of the additional distractions around this time, do not let them interfere with your constant visual supervision of your child when around water.

Social situations are another time when parents need be mindful of the increased probability of drowning. Often at parties and gatherings everyone can assume that someone else is watching the child/children and as such no one is supervising. Nominating a designated "child supervisor" during parties is a way of ensuring that the children are supervised at all times, if this person needs to leave for any reason, ensure a new supervisor is appointed or rotate the supervision responsibilities.

Q. Can I get my older children to look after the younger ones?

- A. No, supervision should be constant visual contact with the child at all times by an adult. Children are not equipped with the skills to respond in an emergency situation, nor should they be given this responsibility. Older siblings may not gauge the importance of the responsibility given to them and become absorbed in their own activities. Children do not always call for help when there is a problem and as such it may be too late by the time you return.

Around the home there are many possible areas that present a drowning danger such as nappy buckets, bathtubs, fish ponds and water features. The water does not need to be deep for a drowning to occur, and as such there are many things you should be mindful of when making your home safe.

Around the Home Safety CHECKLIST:

- Always empty the bathtub after use
- Always drain the water from nappy buckets or ensure they are out of reach with a secure lid in place
- Keep pets water bowls out of reach of children
- Ensure your children know that there is to be no access to the pool without an adult
- Ensure that any water feature has a layer of wire under the surface to prevent children from gaining access
- If water needs to be kept to water the garden or other uses make sure the door is closed
- Never leave the child alone in a location (such as the back yard) where there is water
- Nominate a supervisor during parties or social functions, if there are many children you may need more than 1 supervisor.

Royal Life Saving has developed a number of fact sheets on water safety issues in Australia. Contact Royal Life Saving on:

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