

December 2015

Prevention of Drowning

Don't let you or your family become a statistic this festive season due to unsafe practice around water



Source: Medibank Netcare Database

Drowning is the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/ immersion in liquid.

Near drowning is the survival of a drowning event involving unconsciousness or water inhalation and can lead to serious secondary complications or death, up to 72 hours after the event. It occurs more frequently in males and children.

Drowning itself is quick and silent, although it may be preceded by distress which is more visible. A person drowning is unable to shout or call for help, or seek attention, as they cannot obtain enough air. The instinctive drowning response is the final set of autonomic reactions in the 20-60 seconds before sinking under water and to the untrained eye can look similar to calm and safe behaviour.

Reducing the risk of drowning

Inside your home

- Never leave small children alone in the bath. Ignore the phone and door bell or take the child along.
- Use a non-slip mat in the bath.
- Empty baths, tubs and other containers after use or, when full, keep behind locked doors.
- Never use a bathtub seat or supporting ring without constant adult supervision. The seat can overturn or a baby can slip out into the water.
- Install a toilet lid locking device and keep bathroom doors closed at all times (or you may want to install a door knob cover).

Outdoors

- Children should learn how to swim as soon as possible. It is equally important for them to be trained in survival skills such as floating and treading water. But even then, constant supervision is always necessary. A child should never swim alone. Remember buoyancy aids such as inflatable wings, tubes etc. are only aids. Don't rely solely on their protection.
- Warn against boisterous play in or near water. A dam wall or an area surrounding a swimming pool is no place to ride a bicycle.
- Children should practice coping in water with their clothes on.
- Children should never dive or jump into water they are unacquainted with, or when people are in the way.

Around the pool

- The gate should have a self-latching mechanism.
- Do not prop open the pool gate.
- Use safety covers for pools not in use
- Never leave a child unattended near a pool.
- Do not use flotation toys as life preservers.
- Never assume your child is drown-proof even if they can swim.
- Remove toys from the pool when kids are finished swimming to prevent them from trying to recover them when unsupervised.
- Empty out all water from a wading pool when you are finished using it.
- Remove any ladders from an above ground pool when not in use.
- If you leave your child with a babysitter make sure she/he knows your rules for the pool.

Helping a child in trouble

Throw the victim something that floats or offer a long object to hold onto. At all costs, avoid a double tragedy. Discourage children from jumping in. If you must go in, take something for the child to hold onto rather than permitting him to grab you. Warn children about faking cries for help or pretending to be in trouble. Everybody in your home should be taught simple rescue methods and first aid, especially CPR.

Important Emergency Numbers

Netcare 911: 082 911 **SAPS: 1011**

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NETCARE 082 911
24HR EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE



You're in safe hands