Spring Valley Pediatrics PLLC

Water Safety for Kids

Simple Habits That Help Keep Children Safe

Water is often part of the best moments of childhood: swim lessons, pool days, beach trips, sprinklers, bath time, and summer play with friends. With a few thoughtful habits, families can help children enjoy those moments more safely.

The best approach to drowning prevention is using several layers of protection at the same time: close supervision, safe barriers, swim skills, life jackets when needed, and a clear emergency plan.

1. Choose a Water Watcher

- When children are in or near water, an adult should be actively watching at all times. At parties, vacations, or family gatherings, supervision can become unclear because everyone assumes somoene else is watching.
- A helpful habit is to name a "water watcher." This adult's only job is to keep eyes on the children near the water, without phones, reading, or multitasking. Adults can take turns. For babies, toddlers, and children still learning to swim, an adult should stay within arm's reach.

2. Use Swim Lessons as One Layer

- Swim lessons help children build confidence and learn important skills, such as floating, treading water, reaching the wall, climbing out, and following basic water rules.
- Many children can begin lessons after their first birthday, depending on their development and readiness. For infants under 1, parent–child water classes can be a nice introduction, but they are not considered drowning prevention.
- Even strong swimmers still need adult supervision. Swim lessons reduce risk, but they do not replace watchful adults.

3. Make the Environment Safer

- Many safety steps happen before children get in the water. Keep pools should have a secure four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Pool doors, gates, covers, and alarms all add protection, especially for young children.
- After swimming, remove toys from the pool so children are not tempted to reach for them. When visiting another home, rental, or vacation spot, look for pools, hot tubs, ponds, fountains, buckets, or water tables that could attract curious toddlers.

4. Choose the Rignt Life Jacket

- Floaties and inflatable toys are not safety devices. They can slip, deflate, or give children more confidence than their skills can support.
- Around boats, docks, lakes, rivers, and open water, children should wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket. It should match your child's weight, fasten securely, and stay snug when gently lifted at the shoulders.

5. Remember Everyday Water Risks

- For babies and toddlers, water safety also includes bathtubs, toilets, buckets, kiddie pools, fountains, and water tables.
- Empty tubs, buckets, and small pools right after use. Keep bathroom doors closed, and stay within arm's reach during bath time.

6. Know What to Do in an Emergency

- CPR is a skill every parent hopes never to need, but it is one of the most valuable tools a caregiver can have. Parents, grandparents, babysitters, nannies, and other regular caregivers should consider learning infant and child CPR.
- If you have a pool, keep rescue equipment nearby and make sure caregivers know where it is. It also helps to talk through the basics: who calls 911, who starts CPR, and how emergency responders would access the pool or yard.

7. A Simple Takeaway

Water safety is not about taking the joy out of swimming. It is about building calm, consistent habits that help children enjoy water with more confidence and protection. With a little preparation and close supervision, families can make the most of pool days, beach trips, and backyard fun. Have a wonderful, safe summer!

For questions about swim readiness, water safety by age, or your child's health or development, don't hesitate to give us a call!