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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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BE SAFE THIS SUMMER



Water Safety Tips METROWEST YMCA

Summer time is here! Most people don't think much about water safety — but they should. For people between the ages of 5 and 24, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death. Most water-related accidents can be avoided by knowing how to stay safe in and around the water. Below is a list of Water Safety Tips, please read them and share them with your friends and family.

- **Learning how to swim is essential** if you plan on being in or near water. Swim lessons are available from many organizations such as: the YMCA, your local Park and Rec department, town beaches & private swimming clubs.
- **Buddy Up!** Always swim with a friend. Even experienced swimmers can become tired or get muscle cramps, which might make it difficult to get out of the water. When people swim together, they can help each other or go for help in case of an emergency
- **Know your limits** If you're not a good swimmer or you're just learning to swim, don't go in water that's so deep you can't touch the bottom and don't try to keep up with skilled swimmers. That can be hard, especially when your friends are challenging you — but it's a pretty sure bet they'd rather have you safe and alive.
- **Swim in safe areas only.** It's a good idea to swim only in places that are supervised by a life-guard. No one can anticipate changing ocean currents, rip currents, sudden storms, or other hidden dangers.
- **Be careful about diving.** Diving injuries can cause permanent spinal cord damage, paralysis, and sometimes even death. If an area is posted with "No Diving" or "No Swimming" signs, pay attention to them. Even if you plan to **jump in feet first, check the water's depth before you leap** to make sure there are no hidden rocks or other hazards. Lakes or rivers can be cloudy and hazards may be hard to see.
- **Alcohol and water never mix.** Alcohol is involved in numerous water-related injuries and up to half of all water-related deaths.

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- **Watch Small Children!** Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a small child to wander away. Children have a natural curiosity and attraction to water. **Lifeguards are not babysitters, if you have to step away from the pool or water front, make sure everyone in your party is out of the water and safe. Take small children with you.**



- **Watch the Weather.** Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.
- **The Sun.** Be sure to limit your direct exposure to the sun's UVR rays (ultraviolet radiation). Wear a lightweight cover-up, sit in shady areas, and be sure to reapply sunscreen with SPF 20+ throughout the day.
- **Secure your Pools!** Large, inflatable, above-ground pools have become increasingly popular for backyard use. Children may fall in if they lean against the soft side of an inflatable pool. **Keep the ladders pulled up to prevent unsupervised access to the pool.** Although such pools are often exempt from local pool fencing requirements, it is essential that they be surrounded by an appropriate fence just as a permanent pool would be so that children cannot gain unsupervised access.
- **Boating is Fun and Dangerous.** Children should wear life jackets at all times when on boats or near bodies of water. Blow-up water wings, toys, rafts and air mattresses should not be used as life jackets or personal flotation devices. **Adults should wear life jackets for their own protection, and to set a good example.**
- **Never let your child swim in canals or any fast moving water.** Teach children about fast moving water and rip currents. If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to shore until you escape the current, and then swim back to shore.

If you are a good swimmer and have had lessons, keep an eye on friends who aren't as comfortable or as skilled as you are. If it seems like they (or you) are getting tired or a little uneasy, suggest that you take a break from swimming for a while.

Talk to your kids, family, nephews, nieces, neighbors and friends about the importance of water safety!

Share these tips and help to save a life this summer!

METROWEST YMCA

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WORKS CITED:

The above tips and guidelines were compiled from:
www.Kidshealth.org Kids Health/Teens Health
www2.redcross.org American Red Cross
www.aap.org American Academy of Pediatrics