

Water Safety Tips

Pre Spring & Thinking Ahead

Submitted by George Young 1/23/2013

With Summer many months away and Spring just around the corner, it may be time to start thinking about aquatic activities and also water safety. Below I have listed three water safety tips that are often lost in wave of news released every pre summer:

#1: Watch out for the two biggies: biggie #1 Too tired from either strenuous activity (playing in the park or diving off the diving board 75 times) or from biggie #2 the elements. Elements such as weather issues or pool temperature can lead to muscle cramps or weak muscles. Most youngsters think they can start off right where they left off last summer. Swimming for hours and swimming great distances. **But** a lot can happen in 9-10 months and youngsters may not be able to start at the level of last summer. Take it slow in the beginning and build into it.

#2: The Dangerous Myth of "Drownproofing" I have heard this many times... My child passed level 4 or 5 for the A.R.C. and they are now a great swimmer and will never drown... My 5 year old just completed the City's 5-6 Tiny Tots program and she can swim and is drownproof... My son is on the swim team and is an excellent swimmer he can swim without a lifeguard being present. All these are just myths... **In my dictionary, there is no such word as "drownproof"**. At any given time a child or adult could drown. Getting a leg cramp, misjudging the wall and hitting ones head or just be silly or careless could lead to drowning. No matter what level the swimmers are they need to be watched. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, year after year, drowning was the #1 cause of death for children. **I wish** there were data on how children drown each year that could actually pass an ARC Level II class. **I believe** that the data would be an eye opening stat!

#3: The third tip is right out of the ARC water safety handbook — Set specific swimming rules for each individual in a family or group based on swimming ability. Also make sure swimmers know about the water environment and any potential hazards. **"A closer look"**: individual rules should be based on safety of each individual swimmer. Inexperienced swimmers should stay in water less than chest deep. Potential Hazards are not limited to this list (just a starting point and hopefully awareness will be the key to noticing hazard conditions): deep water, shallow water, very shallow water, currents, cold water, no safety equipment, no life guard on duty, can not see the bottom of the pool, no pool/lake rules posted or no designated responsible person to watch over the swimmers.

Happy Safe Swimming!