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THE INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM
A program of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Water Safety for Your School-aged Child

Swimming and playing in water can give your child much enjoyment and good exercise. But you must take steps to prevent your child from drowning.

- Never let your child swim in any body of water without an adult watching. The supervising adult should be focusing all his or her attention on the child and not be using a phone, reading a book, or distracted in any way.

- Be sure the adult watching your child knows how to swim, get emergency help, and perform CPR.

- Keep a life preserver and shepherd's hook in the pool area to help pull a child to the edge of the pool if necessary.

- Teach your child safety rules and make sure they are obeyed.
  — Never swim alone. Lifeguards, supervising adults, and buddies can all help prevent drowning.
  — Never dive into water except when permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water and who has checked for underwater objects.
  — Always use a life jacket when on a boat, fishing, or playing in a river or stream.

- Do not permit your child to walk or skate on ice unless an adult has checked that the ice is thick enough to be safe.

- Don't let young children and children who cannot swim use inflatable toys, water wings, or mattresses in water that is above the waist. These are toys, not safety devices.

- Watch children closely when they are playing near standing water, wells, open postholes, or irrigation or drainage ditches. If possible, get rid of standing water near your home.

- Teach your child to swim once he or she is ready. Some children may be ready to learn as early as age 1 year. All children should have the opportunity to learn swim skills by age 5 years.

From Your Doctor

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