Keep Your Child Safe in the Water

by Renate Henry Olaisen

Summer is a time when families stream to pools, parks, beaches, and lakes to cool down and enjoy the water. Playing in the water is a fun and happy experience, but drowning or near-drowning can occur in moments.

Last year in California, drowning accidents were the cause of death for more than 360 people; 77 of these victims were younger than 13 years of age. Drowning is the leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 5 and 24 and the second cause of death for children under 5 years. And sadly, most drownings happen in home swimming pools.

The frightening reality is that within seconds a child can slip into the water, swallow copious amounts of water, and slip into unconsciousness. A child can lose permanent brain function within 2-4 minutes if he remains under water and often life ceases within four minutes. Rescued drowning victims are frequently left with permanent brain damage.

That said, swimming and water activities are a wonderful form of recreation and exercise for children, and should definitely be encouraged. But, to ensure the safety of your children, practice key preventative tactics around water, whether it is a bathtub, hot tub, swimming pool, pond, lake, or ocean:

DO

- Stay within arms reach of your child if your child is not able to swim.
- Have your child take swim lessons to become a competent swimmer.
- Teach your child to respect water; never turn your back on the waves.
- Teach your child to obey and read the rules at the pool, water park, beach, etc.
- Get out of the water when tired or when the water gets too rough.
- Swim in sight of the lifeguard and in designated swim areas.
- Go down the slide feet first and face up.
- Wear protective footwear if the ground is rough, rocky, or slippery.

DO NOT:

- Never let your children swim alone.
- Don’t swim out too far or too deep.
- Don’t swim in the dark.
- Do not allow them to run, push, or jump on each other.
- Don’t dive in areas that aren’t designated for diving.
- Don’t swim or play in dark or murky water because you can’t see the bottom and obstructed debris or plant material may endanger your child.
- Do not swim or boat in a storm. Water and electricity are a dangerous combination.
- Do not swim close to rocks or piers. If the water becomes rough you can be thrown against them.
- Don’t chew gum or eat while swimming. You could choke.
- Get out of the water if you feel a cramp. Wait until your muscles relax before returning to water.

PARENTS:

- Learn how to swim yourself
- Become certified in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)
- Keep your eyes on your children at all times
- Keep a phone near you in case you need to dial 911
- Remember, do not depend on lifeguards to watch your child at all times; they have many people to watch over.
- An adult who can swim must always remain on the pool deck or shore watching the child regardless of how strong a swimmer a child is.
- Inflatable devices and other types of flotation devices do not guarantee safety.

(Continued on pg 18)
Bike Buddies of San Carlos: Family-Friendly Bike Riding

Watch where the side straps align, too. They should pass next to, not over, the ears. The buckles should rest just below the earlobes.

Always check that the helmet rests squarely on the head so that the helmet’s brow juts forward to protect the forehead and face during a fall. Some helmets include bumped-out brows or visors for this purpose. The front edge of the helmet should rest at or near the top of the eyebrows. One of the first mistakes a child often makes when putting on his own helmet is to tilt it back, exposing his forehead to the dangers of a fall, so always double-check this before rides.

Helmet Care
Another important thing to keep in mind is that the helmet is a protective device that requires proper care to do its job. Teach your child to treat his helmet with respect because if he abuses it, it may not be able to offer total protection in an accident. For example, repeatedly dropping a helmet on a hard surface or leaving it in a parked car on hot summer days are mistakes that can seriously reduce a helmet’s protective qualities.

Helmet Institute
For more information about helmets for adults and children, visit www.helmets.org.

Breastfeeding Support Outside the Home Secrets to Success

Other issues such as the return of your period, plugged ducts, hormonal contraception, and illness can also impact your milk supply. Work with your lactation consultant and MD to avoid or resolve supply concerns centered on these factors.

Make sure to thank your employer for the lactation accommodations and time they have provided. Letting HR departments and administration know how appreciative you are will go a long way in supporting future breastfeeding women in your workplace.

One Month and Beyond
Congratulations — you are a successful working/pumping mom! You have found a routine that works and you are providing breastmilk for your baby. At this point, keep in mind that you’ll be expressing milk for a relatively short time - not the rest of your life. Troubleshooting, rather than the daily routine, is now your focus. Make sure to lower your stress level as much as possible. Take care of yourself, eat well, and share the childcare and chores.

When it comes time to decrease your pumping schedule, you may still need to do some pumping to prevent plugged ducts and mastitis and to keep up your supply for the times you are together. If you are away from your baby for seven hours or more, you will need to pump at least once or twice. At one year of age your baby will require around 3-4 servings of milk per day. These can be provided at the breast in most cases.

Keep Your Child Safe in the Water

- Children should not play in deep water unless they have demonstrated that they have the endurance to tread water, stay afloat, and swim for an extended period.
- When swimming at the beach, check with the lifeguards to determine the water conditions. It is always smart to go to a pool, lake or beach where lifeguards
are on duty. Lifeguards greatly improve safety; they receive training in accident prevention, CPR and AED utilization, and basic first aid. However, do not give them full responsibility for your child’s life; they have dozens of people to keep their eye on and if they are occupied by another emergency your child is further at risk.

While water wings and other inflatable devices can allow for a wonderful experience for a non-swimmer, they absolutely will not keep a child from drowning. Inflatable devices often lose air due to small holes and prolonged water and sun exposure. A child’s face can easily drop below the surface if the device is not properly inflated. Remember, these are not life-saving devices.

Even life jackets provide no guarantees. A child might lose her balance or get knocked over easily when wearing a bulky life jacket. A startled and submerged child may gulp water.

Following these safety guidelines can help prevent water accidents. To help you keep your children safe in and around water, Abilities United Aquatic Services, located at 3864 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto 650-494-1480, www.abilitiesunited.org offers CPR, AED, nanny safety-course, children’s swim lessons, adult swim lessons (both group [1:8] and individual sessions to match your schedule), and two-hour community water safety course (July 16, 6:00-8:00pm; August 27, 6:00-8:00pm).

Jump in the water with your child this summer! You’ll have a safe and happy time if you are ready for action should you need to take it.

Renate Henry Olaisen, Director of Abilities United Aquatic Services, is certified with the American Red Cross and lectures frequently on water safety to small groups, schools and workplaces. In addition, Renate teaches aquatic certification courses at Abilities United.

(Continued from pg 12)

Baby’s First Haircut

clippers.
• Let your child take a favorite toy or blanket.
• If your child is fearful of strangers, sit the child in your own lap and then have the hair stylist work.

And after the first haircut is over? At many children’s hair salons, the child is presented with a certificate and the mom or dad is presented with a little bag of first clippings, which if you’re like me, will be kept in a safe place forever.

As for what happens when you first behold your child’s transition from baby to toddler or from toddler to big boy, it’s not a bad idea to have an extra tissue tucked beside your camera.

(Continued from pg 15)

Staycations: There's no place like home for summer

morning,” Rossi explained.

Trisha Valbusa’s two kids have been camping in their garden for the last few years.

“It started when my kids wanted to go camping one summer. Finding the weekend and making reservations at a camp site got to be such a hassle and it was tiring thinking about how much food and items we’d have to bag and box and then load in the car,” said Valbusa, whose family lives in San Mateo.

Since they had accumulated camping gear over the years from past trips, Valbusa suggested setting up quarters in the backyard to her kids.

“They loved the idea and slept in the tent for two weeks,” Valbusa said.

No backyard? No worries! A large blanket draped between a couch and a coffee table makes a great “tent” for kids 6 and under. Add a flashlight and have everyone pull a sleeping bag out to the family room. Rent a movie, turn off the lights and pretend you’re camped at a drive-in.

Jennifer Levine, a mother of two in Dana Point, California, loves to enjoy morning brunches on the patio with her family.

“I love cooking a fabulous breakfast on the grill and serving it outside. It has become our Sunday morning ritual and my family enjoys it like we are at a resort,” she described.

Finally, as summer draws to a close, choose a day to stay in for a special project. Set out some fun craft paper, scissors and glue, as well as an assortment of photos that commemorate the time your family has spent together over the break. Every family member can then choose a photo and write down what their greatest memory was of the summer. Younger kids can describe an event to an adult or older child who can then record it for them. Combine everyone’s pages by punching holes and tying ribbons through them to create a family album.

Whether or not you go abroad this summer, if you remember that vacation is a state of mind, you’ll have fun regardless of the destination.

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