

Be Water Smart At The Pool Or On Vacation

By Eleni Fakotakis, Director SSHQ

The third week of July is National Drowning Prevention Week. As we enjoy our summer months swimming in the pool or at the beach or going to that fun boat or fishing trip with friends, it is important to recognize the risks in order to prevent any unnecessary incidents and accidents. According to statistics, drowning is the second leading cause of injury related death for Canadian children. Every year almost 60 children drown and 140 children must stay in the hospital due to water injuries. Drowning is the third most common cause of accidental death worldwide. Particularly vulnerable to drowning are children under five. However, adolescents and young adults should also exercise caution as at times they overestimate their own skills and underestimate the depth of water or strength of the current or may be acting on a "dare" of a friend. It is important to discuss and sensitize children at a very early age to water safety, there are many videos available on water and pool safety. 80% of victims who drowned were not wearing a floatation device. The over 55 years of age group, particularly males should also be careful as they also overestimate their own skills or may experience a medical condition, such as heart attack in the water.

Water safety tips:

Be aware that the elderly can have a heart attack or epileptic seizure in the bathtub

Instruct young children not to drink pool water

Drain unnecessary accumulations of water, from the bathtub, buckets, etc.

Always swim with a friend

Don't run around the pool area

The elderly should wear a medical bracelet alerting others to special conditions

Don't dive into unknown bodies of water

Don't push another person into the water

Enlist your child in swimming lessons and survival swimming

Have a phone near the pool

Keep pool and the pool area clean and clear

Avoid burns with hat, sun-glasses and appropriate sun screen

Use a pool cover and install a pool perimeter fence or barrier, a pool alarm can also be useful.

The same goes for babies and bath-tubs, don't leave baby in the bath tub unattended, not even for one second, to answer the phone or to text a quick message.

Boating trips:

Always wear a lifejacket

Don't drink and boat

Don't drink and swim

Be aware of the dangers of cold water submersion (with a life vest) do not try to swim after the gasp reflex. Remain calm, cross arms tightly over chest and bring up the knees; this is the HELP position, (Heat escape lessening position). It is supposed to increase survival time by 50%.

Also be aware of how strong an undercurrent could be

Take boating courses

Take CPR courses