

Be Water Smart

Swim in designated areas when lifeguards are present at the beach, park, or lake. Lifeguards watch for swimmers in need of help, monitor for dangerous weather, and alert people to beach surf changes or sea life close to the shore.

A **rip current** is a strong flow of water moving away from shore that carries water and sand out to sea. If caught in a rip current:

- Stay calm
- Swim parallel to the shore - since most rip currents are an average of 100 feet wide, you will exit the flow of the rip current.
- Relax and breathe, keeping your head above water, and don't wear yourself out by swimming against the force of the current.

Parents should continue **active supervision** even when lifeguards are present.

Know the meaning of **warning flag** symbols.

Life jackets are essential for boating and open water activities. Use US Coast Guard-approved life jackets appropriate for your size and activity and ensure children wear them on, in, and near the water.



Swim Lessons

Swimming skills and **water competency** are essential for everyone, including children. Water competency means the ability to enter water safely, float or tread water, swim a distance and exit water safely. Learning these skills reduces drowning risk by up to 88% in open water situations.

Learning **CPR** (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is extremely valuable. Your CPR skills could save someone's life in the time it takes for paramedics to arrive. Organizations such as the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association offer CPR training courses both online and in-person.

Contact Us

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of Health**

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[FloridaHealth.gov/Drowning](https://www.floridahealth.gov/drowning)



WATER SAFETY

FOR YOUR CHILD

**Florida
HEALTH**



Safe Bathing Practices

Experts recommend that children under 2 years of age are bathed in **less than 2 inches of water**.



Avoid distractions. Prepare for bathtime before your baby is in the water. Leave your phone in another room. If you do have to leave for any reason, take your baby with you. Never leave your baby unattended.

Check the **water temperature** with your elbow to make sure it is comfortably warm and not hot. Bubble baths are not recommended.



Hold your child **firmly but gently**, ensuring your baby's face is above water at all times.

Keep bath time **short and sweet**. For newborns, bath time should last no more than 10 minutes.



Drowning Facts

Drowning is the **leading cause of death** for children ages 1-4.

Most infant drownings occur in the bathtub. Drowning can take place in as little as **2 inches of water**, in under **30 seconds**.

Drowning deaths of children age 4 and younger most often occur in pools, lakes, or retention ponds. Most of these happen **during non-swim-time**, meaning no one is actively engaged in swimming activities.

Drowning is fast, silent, and can happen to anyone. Drowning is also **preventable**.

Active Supervision

Constant, active supervision is one of the best ways to prevent a tragedy. An adult should always be within arm's length of infants, toddlers, or children who are in or near water.

- An adult in charge of watching a child, whether in a bathtub or a pool, should be **fully focused** — no phone use, reading, or other distractions.
- Flotation devices, water wings, and foam toys are **not a substitute** for active supervision.



Home Safety

Once your baby starts crawling, other areas around the house pose drowning risks, such as toilets, mop buckets, and the water bowl of the family pet. Barriers like fencing prevent access to swimming pools for curious children. Fences should be four feet high and four sided (or three plus the wall of the house) and include self-latching gates.