



## Drowning Prevention

Drowning can happen to anyone, even people who know how to swim.

You can drown in less than a minute and in only a few inches of water.

You can take steps to keep yourself and others safe when in and around water.

### Why is this Important?

- Drowning can happen anywhere there is water.
- Drowning is preventable. There are things you can do to make sure it doesn't happen to you.
- Individuals who survive near-drowning often have permanent brain damage and may need help for the rest of their lives.



### Warning Signs of Drowning

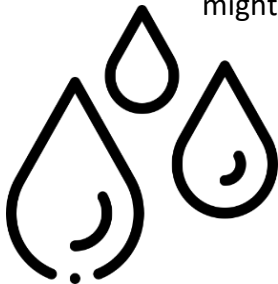
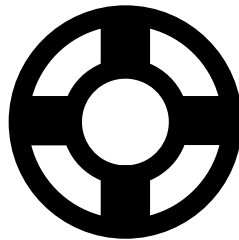
There often is no warning or sound when someone is drowning, so watch for these signs:

- Person in the water has their head tilted back.
- Person in the water has their hair over their face or forehead.
- The person in the water looks like they are floating face down.
- Person in the water looks like they are trying to climb a ladder.



### What to do if you are Having an Emergency in the Water

- Yell for help.
- Keep your head above the water.
- Flip onto your back and float. Spread your arms and legs. Take deep breaths so you stay afloat.
- Kick off your shoes and take off any extra clothes (like a jacket or heavy pants) that might prevent you from floating.



- Try to signal for help.
- If someone reaches out with their hand, leg, or an object that floats, grab it so they can pull you to safety.

### Downloadable Poster



You can download this poster from DDS about how to stay safe in the water: [Drowning is Silent](#)

## Tips to Stay Safe in the Water

- Learn to swim.
- Learn basic water safety skills like floating.
- Learn about what to do in emergencies.
- Never swim alone. No one is old enough to swim without a buddy or telling someone.
- Be careful even in the bathtub.
- Use flotation devices or wear life jackets when going swimming or on a boat.
- Do not swim if you take medication that makes you drowsy.
- Do not get into the water if you have been drinking alcohol.
- Don't go into the water at the beach if there are warnings about rip tides.
- Get out of the water if you have floated or drifted too far.
- Close gates around swimming pools or spas.
- Close pool or spa covers when no one is in the water.
- Do not jump into the water to try to save someone else.
- Instead, reach in with your hand, leg, or an object or throw something that floats such as a life jacket into the water that the other person can grab onto.
- Always supervise young children around buckets of water or wading pools.

Source: [CDC](#); [American Red Cross](#)



### Additional Resources

- [Drowning Prevention Information | DDS](#)
- [Drowning Prevention Information | CDC](#)
- [Drowning Prevention Information | WHO](#)
- [Flip, Float, and Follow! | Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project](#)



Wellness and Safety Bulletins are produced by the Department of Developmental Services to alert individuals, families, and others to specific risks identified with our community.

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