

05

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving  
ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA



FACT SHEET No.05

# Bath Time Safety

## Q. How many bathtub drowning deaths occur each year?

A. In Australia, on average, 5 children under the age of 5 drown and 47 are hospitalised due to bathtub drowning or near drowning incidents each year. One in four hospitalisations results in permanent injury such as brain damage. To address this, the Keep Watch @ Bath Time program has been developed which has a brochure and a tap hanger to inform parents and carers of how to prevent their child from drowning at bath time.

## Q. When do bathtub drowning deaths occur?

A. The majority of bathtub drowning deaths occur when there is an interruption to the bathing routine such as the doorbell or phone ringing while a parent is bathing a child. The majority of bathtub drowning deaths in Australia are of children less than 2 years old.

## Q. Can I leave my child alone for a small amount of time?

A. No. Many parents and carers mistakenly believe they will "only be gone for a minute" but this is enough time for tragedy to occur. The majority of bathtub drowning deaths in Australia are of children who were already in the bathtub when they drowned. If you must leave the bathroom – take your child with you. Do not leave children in the care of older children, they may not perceive the amount of danger a young child may be in.

## Q. Why do parents leave their child unsupervised in the bath?

A. Parents leave their child unsupervised in the bath because they are:

- Fetching forgotten clothes/towel
- Answering the door
- Doing the washing
- Answering/making phone calls
- Doing the dishes
- Going to the toilet
- Attending to other children

## Q. Can you use a bath seat or bathing aid?

A. Yes, however bath seats or bath aids are no substitute for active adult supervision. These devices do not prevent children from climbing or falling out of the seat and drowning, and parents should not believe their child is safer in one of these devices.

## Real Life Story - Bathtub Drowning Death

The importance of supervision and restricting access to water for children under the age of 5 has again been highlighted with the recent drowning death of a baby boy in a bathtub in QLD. Unbeknown to the parents, the baby gained access to the bathroom through a door that was left ajar. He was found by his parents face down and unconscious in the bathtub. The parents performed CPR until the ambulance arrived however the boy was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

ROYAL LIFE SAVING HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF  
FACT SHEETS ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.

Contact Royal Life Saving on: **1300 737 763**  
or download them from: **www.keepwatch.com.au**



## Bath Time Safety Checklist:

- Everything ready for bathing
- Cold water run first and turned off last
- Tested water to ensure it is comfortably warm
- Water kept to a minimum depth
- Child actively supervised by responsible adult
- Child supervised within arms' reach and never left alone



ACTIVELY SUPERVISE  
@ BATH TIME

Be Prepared  
Be Within Arms' Reach  
All of Your Attention  
All of the Time

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