

08

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving
ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA



FACT SHEET No.08

Home Pool Safety



Q. Why should I be concerned with home pool safety?

A. Home swimming pools are the most dangerous aquatic location for young children. In 2009/10 33 children under the age of five died from drowning. Of these 16 children drowned in swimming pools.

Q. How do so many drowning deaths occur in home swimming pools?

A. Home swimming pools are located close to the house and a child's natural curiosity may bring them into contact with the pool. In the majority of home swimming pool drowning deaths the toddler entered the pool area and drowned without the knowledge of the parent. The most common entries into home pools for toddlers are: via an open gate or one that has been propped open, through a house door, or by using nearby equipment to climb over the fence.

Q. Will I hear my child calling for help when drowning?

A. No. Many parents mistakenly believe they can listen out for their child but drowning can occur in a matter of seconds without any splashing or crying to alert parents/caregivers.

Q. How can I prevent my child from drowning?

A. There are several things you can do to prevent drowning:

1. Fence the pool/spa with a four sided fence in accordance with AS1926. This means that access to the pool/spa is via a self-closing, self-latching gate, not the house.
2. Any equipment not related to the function of the pool/spa must be securely stored outside the pool area. The gate to the pool/spa should never be propped open.
3. Regularly inspect your fence (a quick check once a month) using the Home Pool Safety Checklist (downloadable from www.homepoolsafety.com.au) to ensure your fence and gate are in good working order.

Q. What is the Keep Watch program?

A. Royal Life Saving has created the Keep Watch program to prevent toddler drowning in Australia. Keep Watch has four key actions and toddler drowning prevention involves all of these strategies: Supervise, Restrict Access, Water Awareness and Resuscitate.

Real Life Story - Home Pool Tragedy

In a warning to parents everywhere, the second child in 2 days has drowned in a backyard pool in NSW. The toddler gained access to the pool, when the self-latching mechanism on the sliding door to the pool did not work. The toddler was found face down in the backyard pool by relatives and was taken to hospital but she could not be revived. Parents are being urged to learn CPR and to ensure their pool fences are properly secured.

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**

Home Pool Safety Checklist:

- Child supervised within arms' reach when in, on, or around the pool or spa
- Pool fenced effectively
- Gate is self-closing and self-latching and never propped open
- Pool regularly maintained (checked at least once a month). Completed checklist from www.homepoolsafety.com.au
- Child enrolled in a water awareness class such as the Swim and Survive Wonder Program www.swimandsurvive.com.au
- Enrolled in a CPR course. Checked www.royallifesaving.com.au for course details
- CPR skills updated annually

FENCE/GATE/MAINTAIN

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