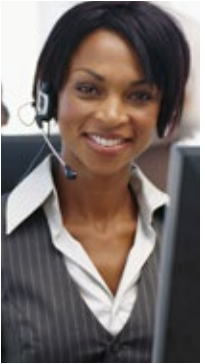




BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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Water Safety

Swimming is a fun and popular summer activity that is enjoyed by children and adults alike. Nothing beats jumping in a cool pool, lake, ocean, or river on a hot summer day! However, water does pose some dangers if the proper precautions are not taken, which is why it is so important to practice water safety.

The American Red Cross encourages everyone to make water safety a priority by following these general guidelines:

Swim only in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.

Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone.

Ensure that everyone in the family learns to swim well. Enroll in age appropriate swim courses or teach your children how to swim yourself.

Never leave a young child unattended near water and do not trust a child's life to another child; teach children to always ask permission to go near water. In addition to adult supervision, ensure young children or inexperienced swimmers wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets around water.

Establish rules for your family. For

example, set limits based on each person's ability, do not let anyone play around drains and suction fittings, and do not allow children to have breath-holding contests.

Even if you do not plan on swimming, be cautious around natural bodies of water including ocean shorelines, rivers and lakes. Cold temperatures, currents and underwater hazards can make a fall into these bodies of water dangerous.

Avoid alcohol use when swimming. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination, affects swimming and diving skills, and reduces the body's ability to stay warm.

If you go boating, wear a life jacket! Most boating fatalities occur from drowning.

There are also certain precautions that pertain to specific bodies of water.

Pool Safety

Install and use barriers around your home pool or hot tub. Safety covers and pool alarms should be added as additional layers of protection. Ensure that pool barriers enclose the

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entire pool area, are at least 4-feet high with gates that are self-closing, self-latching and open outward, and away from the pool. The latch should be high enough to be out of a small child's reach.

If you have an above ground or inflatable pool, remove access ladders and secure the safety cover whenever the pool is not in use.

Remove any structures that provide access to the pool, such as outdoor furniture, climbable trees, decorative walls and playground equipment.

Keep toys that are not in use away from the pool and out of sight. Toys can attract young children to the pool.

Have appropriate equipment, such as reaching equipment to fish someone out of a pool, a cell phone to use in case of emergencies, life jackets and a first aid kit.

Keep your pool or hot tub water clean and clear. Maintain proper chemical levels, circulation and filtration. Regularly test and adjust the chemical levels to minimize the risk of earaches, rashes or more serious diseases.

As a rule, ensure everyone avoids contact with drains and suction fittings. Also be sure your drain covers are compliant and graded as anti-entrapment.

Ocean Safety

Swimming in the ocean poses a few additional dangers that need to be accounted for. Ensure children are able to swim in the surf, which is much different than swimming in still water.

Keep a lookout for aquatic life. Water plants and animals may be dangerous. Avoid patches of plants and always leave sea life (fish and other sea creatures) alone.

Rip currents are extremely dangerous and can form in any large open water area, such as low spots and breaks in sandbars, or near structures such as jetties and piers. Remember the following tips if you find yourself caught in a rip current:

Stay calm and don't fight the current.

Swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current. Once you are free, turn and swim toward shore.

If you can't swim to the shore, float or tread water until you are free of the rip current and then head toward shore.

If you feel you can't make it to the shore, draw attention to yourself by waving and calling for help.

Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Permanent rip currents often exist near these structures.

When at the beach, check conditions before entering the water. Check to see if any warning flags are up or ask a lifeguard about water conditions, beach conditions, or any potential hazards.

Remember that eni's Personal Assistants are available to provide additional information on water safety and resources such as a listing of swim lessons in your area.

Wishing you a fun and safe summer!

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