



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Water Safety Tips

Whether public pools and beaches will open or remain open this summer is still uncertain. What is certain, though, is that when temperatures rise, kids will find any water source to cool off – home pools, ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, or oceans. And that means the risk of drowning is as prevalent as ever.

With National Water Safety Month in May, now is the time for parents and caregivers to reinforce the importance of equipping their kids with essential water safety skills.

As “America’s Swim Instructor,” the Y typically teaches more than 1,000,000 children invaluable water safety and swimming skills each year. But with most Y pools currently closed due to COVID-19, much of this safety programming will be on hold through the next few months. It is, therefore, important that parents know how to take water safety into their own hands.

The Y is providing five tips to ensure a safe and enjoyable swimming experience for all.

1. **Never swim alone or without a water watcher.** When children are swimming, make sure they are actively supervised at all times. Teach your children that they should only swim in locations where a lifeguard is on duty, or where a responsible adult agrees to watch the children in the water without distractions.
2. **Supervise your children whenever they’re in or near water.** Whether it’s bath time or taking a dip in a pool or lake, make sure your children are within arm’s reach at all times.
3. **Don’t engage in breath holding activities.** Children should not hold their breath for a prolonged amount of time while swimming, as this can cause drowning and has several other severe physical side-effects.
4. **Wear a life jacket:** Inexperienced or non-swimmers should wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
5. **Don’t jump in the water to save a friend who is struggling in deep water.** If a child finds their friend in deep water unexpectedly, their natural reaction may be to jump in the water to try to save them. Even if a child is a great swimmer, a panicked person will overpower them and easily pull the rescuer underwater. The Y’s Safety Around Water program teaches the “reach, throw, don’t go” concept of using a long object to reach for them and pull them to safety. By using this technique children can help their friend without compromising their own safety.  
To learn more about the Y’s Safety Around Water and Y Swim Lessons program, visit [www.ymca.net/watersafety](http://www.ymca.net/watersafety).