

SWIMMING POOL AND HOT TUB SAFETY

Working as a paramedic I have personally been involved with several drownings that have occurred in backyard pools. If you have a pool, constant supervision is critical when there are children around.

- Make sure the fence will keep out the neighbors' children. Keep your gate locked when the pool is not in use.
- Sliding doors from the house to the pool deck should be locked to avoid having children get out to the pool area unsupervised.
- Consider a pool alarm. These are devices that float in the pool; the rocking motion caused by sudden waves will sound the alarm. This warns you that someone may have fallen in. Remember, an alarm does not prevent children from falling in, it only warns you after the event, don't rely on it.
- Avoid running and horseplay on the pool deck. Decks are usually slippery and they are always hard.
- Diving boards may be dangerous in certain pools. Many broken necks have been the result of hitting the upslope of the pool bottom head first. This is also a frequent cause of spinal cord injuries in adolescents and adults.
- Pool covers do not prevent drownings. In fact, children and adults have drowned when they became trapped under the pool cover and could not get out.
- Children may drown in pools of water that have collected on top of the pool cover after a rain. When there is a small weight on the cover (such as a small child), the water will collect in the indentation and form a puddle that is deep enough to drown a small child.
- Covers for hot tubs should be locked to keep children out.
- In a hot tub, close supervision is as important as it is for swimming pools. Very young children should not be allowed into hot tubs. Young children cannot tolerate the heat as well as adults can; serious heat-related illnesses may occur.
- Keep pool and hot tub chemicals out of reach of the children and locked in a cabinet.

